

EMILY DE VARMONT;

OR

DIVORCE

Dictated by necessity;

TO WHICH ARE ADDED

The Amours of Father Sévin.

FROM THE FRENCH OF LOUVET,

Late President of the National Convention of France,
Author of Faublas, &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON,

PRINTED FOR G. KEARSLEY, NO. 46, FLEET-STREET.

1798.

FAMILY DE VARMONT;

OF THE FAMILY OF CH

DIGITATED BY XEROGRAPHY

TO WHICH ARE ADDED

The History of the Family of Varmont



FROM THE COLLECTION OF THE

BRITISH MUSEUM, LONDON

IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. I.

LONDON

PRINTED FOR G. REYNOLDS, NO. 10, FLEET STREET

1793

EMILY DE VARMONT.

~~It was not until I saw it~~
DOROTHY DE VARMONT, to EMILY
DE VARMONT.

Providence Convent, May 11, 1782.

BEWAIL my fate, my dear Emily! bewail your own! You have no longer a sister! There now exists no further connection between your sister and the world, than that of her regret,—of her regret which will last as long as her life itself.

It was this morning.... Gracious God! already it appears to me an age—a whole age of suffering!.... yes, this

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morning I took the veil ! the eternal sacrifice is consummated.

It was not without a cruel intention, that, on the very day which witnessed the departing sighs of our father, his widow — who no longer deserves that I should bestow on her any other appellation — caused you to be torn away from the convent, where we might at least, my dearest Emily, have mingled our sighs together. To weaken, she found it necessary to separate us : — united, we should have been less easily subdued. Not that I am vain enough to suppose that your firm and courageous counsels would have sufficiently protected me against the violence of our common enemy, and especially against myself — against myself, who, unable on any occasion to get the better of my

timidity or my terrors, have never viewed the countenance of my father's wife, without sighing or shuddering in her presence. Too well I feel, that, by a single word, by a look, Madame De Varfont would have scared away my firmest resolves. Sooner or later, in spite of all your efforts, and under your very eyes, she would have succeeded in dragging her victim to the altar. But then that accumulation of wretchedness would itself have afforded me one powerful motive of consolation — the day of my oppression would have been that of your deliverance. Ah! can it be supposed that the well-founded aversion you entertain for that life of listless lassitude, of moping indolence, and utter dereliction, which is called the monastic life, would not have turned to downright hatred, when you had

witnessed the deep despair which seized on the wretched Dorothy at the moment when she was compelled to sacrifice herself for ever? And if once they had so far succeeded as to make you wear even for a single hour that fatal habit, that funereal dress, to which you saw your sister condemned for a whole year — now, alas! for ever — if they had so far succeeded, by what means would they ever have been able to force me to pronounce those last vows, which, in spite of my heart, I uttered in murmurs with my lips, and which my broken sighs would perhaps have prevented you from hearing?

She stood by, nevertheless — that woman, who is said to be your mother and mine. — No! she is not our parent! Did she nurse us? did she rear us? —

On the contrary, her hatred ever kept us at a distance, and unceasingly persecuted us. It was for her son — for her son alone — that she reserved the nutriment of her breast, her every care, her undivided tenderness : — nor were her affections misplaced : for, my heart forebodes that he will prove himself the worthy son of such a mother.

My dearest Emily, beware of your brother ! Scarcely arrived at his twentieth year, he has already seared his heart against the touch of compassion : nor does the drop of sensibility ever moisten his eye. Could you conceive that he assisted at the dreadful ceremony ? He came to witness the sacrifice of his sister ! He beheld it without the alteration of a single feature ! The vaulted dome re-echoed a-while with

my mournful sighs : — I saw strangers melt with pity : my mother herself turned pale : but young Varmont remained unmoved. — Gracious God ! I tremble in anticipating his doom ! what future fate hast thou in reserve for him ? what dreadful measure of crimes is he destined to fill ?

May this image of my poignant anguish be ever present to your mind, my dearest Emily : may it incessantly keep you in a state of watchful alarm ! Forget not for one moment that the fate by which I am overwhelmed, is also preparing for you. — I know you are not so weak and timid as your unfortunate sister. I would fain hope that you will courageously repel their criminal solicitations, — that you will spurn at their inhuman entreaties, and despise

their detestable menaces. But it is against their insidious artifices that I thought it necessary to forewarn and arm you. I think them capable of practising the basest of stratagems. If they tell you, Emily — if they dare to tell you, that Dorothy passes her days in peace and content, — show them this letter, bathed with my tears, and signed with my blood.

MADAME DE VARMONT to EMILY.

Paris, May 15.

A FEW days ago, your sister embraced that state which was the only one suitable to her fortune and her family: you will not long delay to imitate so laudable an example.

So fully am I convinced of your willingness to take that step, that I have just dismissed all your masters. I did not think the inhabitant of a convent could have any occasion for music or dancing: nor do I conceive any greater necessity that she should be thoroughly versed in foreign languages: and as to your native tongue, you already possess more

than sufficient of it to enable you to pronounce your vows.

To-morrow morning I shall send for the chief part of your clothes. — Your father took pleasure in inspiring you with a taste for luxury, and with coquettish notions, which it is absolutely necessary that you should now lay aside. Besides, what use could you henceforward have for such a costly wardrobe? Within a week at farthest, you are to wear the novicial habit. — If you happen to entertain a repugnance to the state for which you are destined, still it is not me you are to blame for having forced you to embrace it: — your reproaches are solely due to the memory of Monsieur De Varmont, whose foolish extravagance has so reduced the family property, that the remnant which has

fallen to my possession will be hardly sufficient to provide an establishment for my dear son — that valuable youth, who is the sole consolation of his mother — the only hope of the family. On the other hand, your sister and you invariably affected to idolise your father. But why should I be surprised at such conduct? It was but natural that you should both adore him, since he was the constant torment and plague of my life.

I have but a word more to say to you, Madam. I know you to be addicted to arguing, indocile, obstinate: but you will please to remember that the tyrannic sway of your father is now expired with his life; — that I have the command at present, and that I insist on being obeyed.

EMILY to DOROTHY.

Providence Convent, May 17.

BEHOLD, my dear Dorothy, a letter from my mother, delivered to me in the parlour this morning. I haste to convey it to you, since my two last have safely reached you through the channel you had pointed out, and since you think that to be a safe medium of communication.

The cruel commands of my mother did not surprise me : but I could not help being greatly astonished on recognising the person who delivered them. It was Monsieur Bovile, that young gentleman of tall stature, of advantageous figure, of noble deportment,

whom my father used to call his pupil, — whom he sometimes invited to our house, and whose exploits he took a singular pleasure in relating, after his return from his last cruise. “Ah!” said I to him, “what a dreadful commission they have charged you to execute! — you, Sir, — you, the friend of my father! — Do you think that in the last moments of his life he could have learned without grief that such haste would be made to open graves for his daughters close beside his own?”

“I understand you,” replied Monsieur Bovile: “and to know your sentiments in the first instance, was my earnest wish. Do me the justice, Madam, to believe, that, on the first intelligence of Monsieur De Varmont’s illness, I exerted every effort to obtain leave of

absence from Brest, where I was chained down by the duties of my station. I arrived too late to embrace your revered father, — too late to rescue your elder sister, — but not too late to defend you.”

He quitted me, my dear Dorothy, without further explanation.

EMILY to DOROTHY.

19th May, 11 in the morning.

LET me tell you, Dorothy—He renewed his visit this morning: and here follows the astonishing declaration he made to me—

“ I come to ask you, Madam, whether you would prefer the marriage vows to those of the convent, and entertain no particular aversion to my person. This is the utmost I can expect of you,—I have so seldom enjoyed the happiness of seeing you, and am so little known to you. But what I say of myself with respect to you, I must also say of you with respect to myself.—To declare that I adore you, would be a

falsehood to which you could not give credit. The truth is this — whatever interest your youth and misfortune are capable of exciting in the heart of man, — that interest I feel. No doubt, you are formed by nature to inspire a more lively sentiment: and it is probable I shall in time experience it: but that is a circumstance for which I cannot venture to pledge myself beforehand. How many women, perhaps not inferior to you in beauty, have never kindled an ardent passion in the breast of our sex, and yet have not been the less happy on that account? All, therefore, that I can promise you, in case my offers are not rejected, is, that many wives who think themselves idolised, will have less reason than you, to be pleased with the behaviour of their husbands: for, next to my country, my wife shall ever be

the object of my tenderest care and affection." —

The extraordinary man who thus addressed me, had just risen from his seat : and your sister, my dear Dorothy, rapt in astonishment which could only be equalled by her confusion, continued in a listening attitude even after he had ceased to speak. — After a short interval of silence, he thus resumed —

" There is but one circumstance that I regret ; which is, that I can allow you only a few hours to deliberate. But my time is short : my ship awaits me ; and the voice of my country summons me to war. Deliberate, — make up your mind between this and the evening : — in the evening I shall come to receive your answer. If it be favourable to my

wishes, I instantly fly to Madame Varmont, — obtain her consent, — marry you to-morrow — and depart the next day."

He had taken his leave, and was going, but suddenly returned —

"Do not," said he, "defer the execution of my projects until my return from my cruise. — Madam, I do not wish to deceive you: my profession is a dangerous one. Take my advice — do not leave the peace and happiness of your life at the mercy of those perils by which mine is surrounded. What could induce you to such a step? — An attention to decency? — It would be misplaced, and unseasonable: it is wholly unnecessary in the present instance. Make your mind easy on that

score : — I shall never be tempted to harbour the thought that you were in haste to get married : but I shall request your permission to believe that you were in haste to obtain your liberty. — Till evening, Madam, adieu !”

Dorothy, my dearest Dorothy, aid me with your advice. — What answer shall I give him ? — I think I ought not to hesitate : nevertheless I stand in need of countenance and support.

DOROTHY to EMILY.

19th May, 2 in the afternoon.

EMILY, if my memory does not deceive me, my father has rendered some services to that Monsieur Bovile : — but, what a return does he now make for them ! Have you not reason to expect the most striking instances of kindness and affection from a man who is capable of repaying favours with such delicate generosity ? — Accept his offers : — Bovile is entitled to an invaluable reward — let him obtain that reward in the possession of Emily. — Accept his hand : your bliss will alleviate my misfortune.

BOVILE TO MADAME D'ETIOLES.

19th May, 7 in the afternoon.

YES, that Bovile, whom you once so tenderly loved. . . . pardon me, Eleonora! this is the first time that I have dared to wound your feelings by reviving ideas which I shall never more recall to your remembrance. . . . that Bovile, who so ardently sighed to obtain you, and who would, no doubt, have succeeded in his pursuit, if fathers would but grant their daughters to those who best deserve them by the tenderest and most respectful love. . . . that Bovile, whose despair nearly cost him his life, when you had been forced into the arms of another. . . . that Bovile, whom your commands alone could

prevail on to endure an odious existence after so dire a misfortune, but who swore he would pass the remainder of his days in celibacy, that he might, undistracted by any other object, ever adore the image at least of his Eleonora. that Bovile is on the point of — marrying.

I believe I informed you in my letter of yesterday that the woman whom I destined for my bride is possessed of a thousand charms : but *you* must know, much better than any other person upon earth, that it is not her charms that have induced me to take this step. — I am well aware. and what remark may not freely be made to you, Eleonora, to whom no remark is applicable, except such as is honourable and flattering? I am well aware that nothing is more fallacious than the

countenance of a young woman. I know that the handsomest women are seldom the best ; and that even if she of whom I speak were the very best among the fair, I ought not, without diffidence, to engage in the marriage state in a country where the bands of Hymen are tied with a knot whose indissolubility is truly alarming. Neither am I ignorant that a young couple ought at least to be acquainted with each other's dispositions, before they enter into an engagement which death alone can dissolve. Nevertheless my heart tells me that I am doing a praiseworthy deed in hastening my marriage with this young unknown, who is the daughter of my benefactor, and whom I rescue from the melancholy fate which awaits her : and can an action which in itself is good, ever produce the bitterness of regret ? Suppose it not impossible that this wo-

man may one day behave to me otherwise than she ought ! Under such circumstances, I shall console myself and justify my present conduct by recalling to mind the motives, which, at the moment of my forming the resolution, deprived me of the freedom of choice, and even of reflection itself. What happiness, on the contrary — what consummate bliss for us both — what an inexhaustible source of delight — if I find her possessed of those virtues which I have a right to expect, — if I meet with the most pleasing reward of my imprudent sacrifices, in the object for whom they are made ! Besides, can I, at this momentous crisis, indulge any selfish considerations ? Have I a right to deliberate, when called on by the voice of honour to fulfil a duty ? And if I did take time for deliberation, would it be either strange or un-

precedented if a regard for self should recommend ingratitude?

Eleonora! neither you nor I shall ever forget that a ridiculous and discouraging prejudice condemned me to languish in the obscurity of an inferior grade, where I should have dragged out my existence, almost useless to my country. A worthy man had sufficient penetration to discover my slender merit, and made no inquiries concerning my origin. Such of my officers as had nothing but their noble birth to recommend them, endeavoured to prevent me from becoming their equal. He made me their superior: he promoted me in spite of all the established prejudices of the age, and supported me against the machinations of envy. Did he, I ask, obey the ungenerous suggestions of self-interest, when, for my

fake, he incurred the enmity of several powerful men, and the general blame of his whole corps? The magnanimity which he displayed in refusing to abandon me to my enemies — was it less great than that which should induce me to marry his daughter? — Eleonora! that Monsieur Varmont was a man superior to the age in which he lived. Notwithstanding private piques and animosities, he will be regretted by the naval corps. But it is I, above all — it is I who have the greatest reason to lament his premature loss. It is to him I am indebted for my fortune, my talents, my fame: to him I am indebted for the unexpected happiness of having, young as I am, rendered important services to my country.

I now fly to receive Emily's answer.

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BOVILE to MADAME D'ETIOLES.

19th May, 11 at night.

HER answer was short and simple—
“ Sir, if you know any means of prevailing on my mother to let me live in society, I will live in it, and devote all my care and attention to your happiness.”

I immediately flew to Madame Varmont.—Her son was with her.—At the very first words I spoke, they both appeared petrified with astonishment.—The young man haughtily asked me whether I had any pretensions to nobility. — I answered — “ Yes! the enemies of the state know and fear me.”

The mother, with a disdainful air, declared that it was perfectly indifferent to her whether the husband of her daughter was a nobleman or a commoner: — “but you must know, Sir,” added she, “that I am by no means inclined to leave my son unprovided for.”

“Madam, I require no portion with his sister. — Nay, more, in order to make your mind perfectly easy on that subject, I consent to sign a receipt, acknowledging that you have advanced to me, as your daughter’s share of the inheritance, the sum of”

“Two hundred thousand crowns,” hastily added the generous brother.

“Two hundred thousand crowns: — be it so.”

“ Is it possible,” said Madam Varmont with an air of still greater astonishment than before, — “ is it possible that you can be so strangely bewitched with that little Emily ?”

“ I am not bewitched,” replied I : “ but I recollect that she was not reared up for the solitude of a cloister. — Her father”

“ Her father !” cried she. “ Perish for ever his memory, and every thing capable of recalling it to my mind !”

“ What ! — you heap curses on your husband ? By what crime has he deserved them ?”

“ What crime ? — I have two daughters by him !”

“ Gracious heaven !— But has he not also given you that son who is so dear to you ?”

“ My son ?— By what right, Sir, do you interrogate me ?— Do you mean to dive into my secrets ? Perhaps a day may come when they shall be revealed :— till then I will have them to be respected.”

“ I came not, Madam, with a view to pry into them : I came to ask the hand of Emily.”

“ No !” replied the mother : “ let her be disposed of in the same manner with her sister : let an eternal barrier separate us.”

Here the excellent young man again

thought proper to interrupt his mother :
“ Nevertheless, Madam, if Monsieur Bovile acknowledges the receipt of two hundred thousand crowns, the greatest objection to the marriage is done away.”

“ Well !” said she with an air of irresolution, “ but she would still live in society : I should be exposed to the torment of seeing her !”

My indignation was now wound up to the highest pitch. — “ Heaven forbid, Madam !” cried I. — “ Never, never will I expose you to that torment.”

“ What security will you give me ?”

“ Whatever you think proper.”

"Will you consent that your wife shall spend the remainder of her days in a foreign land?"

"If necessary — if you require it:"

"I do require it."

"Well! I pledge my word of honour that your hapless daughter shall quit her native city in two days, and her country within a week."

"Never more to return?"

"I perfectly well understand that such is your intention."

"What security shall I have for the performance of your promises?"

“A written obligation, with a penalty of a hundred thousand crowns in case of failure.”

“Let a notary be sent for.”

During this dreadful conversation, the youth repeatedly kissed his mother's hands. — The notary arrived ; and both the deeds were executed.

Eleonora ! I claim both your pity and your applause : — when this letter reaches your hands, I shall be already a husband.

MADAME D'ETIOLES to BOVILE.

Tours, May 24.

WHERE is the woman, generous Bovile, who is so insensible to the charms of a noble deed as not to applaud your conduct? In another man, I should have admired it: in *you*, it does not even surprise me. — How I pity that young Varmont! What a punishment already entailed on him for his hatred to the charming Emily! — How truly happy might he be, if his heart were not callous to every natural feeling! How many motives, directly contrary, would any other brother have in his situation, for rejoicing to see you marry his sister!

And then, what a mother is that

Madame Varmont ! Happily, nature does not often produce such.

Without intending it, Bovile, you have afflicted me beyond measure. Receive these confidential effusions of my soul ; for I will not conceal from you any of my sufferings except those which I am not permitted to disclose.

That young Varmont is looked upon as a worthless character : — I was not ignorant of this ; but I was far from thinking him so despicable. — Well, my elder brother is his friend : a circumstance which gives me great uneasiness. Murville undoubtedly possesses an excellent heart : but how many excellent hearts have been corrupted by dangerous and improper connections !

I have one favour to request of you. Murville is in the navy as well as you : it must be easy for you to fall in with him. Seek him out : contract an acquaintance with him. When once, by your virtuous example, you are enabled to protect him against the counsels of your brother-in-law, my mind will be at ease.

Your brother-in-law ! — already ? — you are already married ? — Ah ! may that union afford you a compensation — Ah ! may you be as happy — as I am satisfied with your conduct. I weep, Bovile — Bovile — they are the tears of tenderness — of that esteem with which my soul is penetrated. — Adieu ! may happiness attend you.

EMILY to DOROTHY.

Brest, 28th May, 5 in the afternoon.

O God! almighty God, who searchest the inmost recesses of the heart, thou knowest that we have not deserved her hatred.

Dorothy! my dearest Dorothy! she insisted that I should quit France—that I should abandon my sister—that my exile and our separation should be eternal!

It is but this moment I was informed of the circumstance—at the critical moment when we were on the point of embarkation. Urged by my pressing solicitations, my husband could no

longer conceal from me the dreadful secret.

And see at the same time how a wounded imagination is haunted by tormenting phantoms of its own creation! I had just received the cruel intelligence; and, immersed in deep dejection, sat resting on my elbow at the window, and shedding tears. A young man stopped in the street opposite to my apartment, and viewed me with such earnest attention as for a moment to attract my notice. — I thought, Dorothy, that I discovered in him my brother; and was near fainting at the sight. My eyes, however, involuntarily returned to the object of my terrors: — his back was turned to me, and he was going away. I nevertheless discovered my error by one infallible proof: — my

brother has light-coloured hair — the young man in question, quite dark.

A few minutes more, and we depart. I am to embark in one of the merchant ships of the fleet that is to be escorted by the squadron in which Bovile commands a frigate. He did not choose to expose me on board a vessel likely to be engaged in combat. He intends to leave me in Martinique, where he has some possessions, and where he expects every year to pass some months with me. There he will devote to me every moment that he can possibly spare from the discharge of his functions. The Almighty, ever ready to pity the unfortunate, had in reserve for me a compensation for my first afflictions. He has granted it — he has given me the most valuable of men, the most virtuous

of husbands. But, to you, my dear Dorothy, what consolation remains? You now stand single in the universe — absolutely single and friendless — your only remaining friend was your sister — and she is torn from you. — Ah! it is but too true, that on the day of my marriage I embraced you for the last time of our lives.

A letter! — it is from you — I haste to learn the contents.

DOROTHY to EMILY.

Paris, May 25.

TWO days ago, my dear Emily, — a few hours after our last adieux and your departure — the son of Madame Varmont — yes, Madame Varmont — 'tis the only name to which she is henceforward entitled from you and me : — her son does not deserve a more tender appellation than herself — the son possesses no further claim upon me, any more than the mother : I have now neither parent nor brother : — the whole current of my affection shall now be turned towards my sister, who is as highly deserving as they are unworthy of it. — Monsieur Varmont, then, — Monsieur Varmont had the audacity

to pay me a visit. Before I could open my lips to reproach him with his cruelty, his avarice, his insatiate thirst of wealth, to which he had suffered or rather desired that I should be sacrificed, — before I had time to utter a single word, he thus addressed me —

“You will no longer accuse me of ambition: — there is your sister well married, I hope. — My fortune is diminished above one half. It was, nevertheless, I who prevailed on Madame Varfont to give that little Emily a fortune of six hundred thousand livres!”

You had before apprised me of the conditions on which the generous Bovile had obtained your hand: you had not concealed from me the circumstance which he himself had been obliged to

confess to you at the moment when you were betrothed to him — that he had signed a receipt for a sum which he had never received. Conceive then, if you can, what an effect the confident assurance of that Varmont produced on me. Eager to discover whether he was capable of persevering with unblushing effrontery in maintaining a falsehood, and of coolly supporting the weight of an unmerited encomium, I praised his disinterestedness, I extolled his justice. — Believe me, Emily, he long listened to my praises with all the calm serenity of conscious innocence, all that modest pride of innate virtue, which I had a few hours before observed in your husband, and which I thought exclusively confined to those who are habituated to the practice of noble deeds. But let me inform you — for it is neces-

sary that I should warn you, and show you how cautiously you ought, on every occasion, to stand on your guard against the only but the basest enemy that you can have to fear — let me inform you of the observation he made in return for all my compliments.

“Certainly,” said he, strutting about the apartment with stately strides, and with an air of consummate self-complacency, — “Certainly, ’tis not without a degree of regret that one parts with so considerable a sum. But why should I not expect that I may one day recover it? — Your sister’s constitution is delicate: and if she happens to die without issue, Bovile has sufficient property to refund her marriage portion.”

At this last *trait*, I shuddered. My

indignation would have burst forth in a torrent of opprobrious language: but I retired, darting on him a significant look, of which he could not fail perfectly to comprehend the meaning.

This moment one of Madame Varmont's domestics came to ask me whether I had seen his mistress's son the day before yesterday. It seems he set out from Paris the moment after he had quitted me. The only circumstance that is known respecting him, is, that he took post-horses, and was accompanied by a single servant, the insolent Lafleur, of whom he has made his confidant and bosom friend. Madame Varmont, though long accustomed to such sudden disappearances of her son, seems nevertheless to be very uneasy on the present occasion, — probably be-

cause he, in this instance, quitted her without bidding her adieu. For my part, too, my dear Emily, I am astonished at such extraordinary precipitation, attended with such an air of mystery. Had his object been only one of those parties of pleasure on which he has often been known to spend whole weeks, and at which my father used to appear so displeased, would he not have disclosed his intentions to his mother, whom he has ever been accustomed to honour with his confidential secrets? — What designs, then, can he have in agitation? Whither are his steps directed with such haste? — But, what interest have I in his conduct? Of what consequence is it to me, provided he be only gone to such a distance as never more to have it in his power to alarm either you or me by his odious presence?

EMILY to DOROTHY.

Brest, 28th May, 7 in the evening.

WHAT have I read?— You have redoubled the uneasiness, the terror, by which I was agitated. Can it in fact be Varmont, who but this moment.....Heavens! what exquisite torture, to fear those whom we would wish to love!— Can it be Varmont?— I have often heard that there is an art of changing the colour of the hair.— But, even if it were he, surely he did not come here on my account. What business can he have with me? What further demand can he have against his sister who is on the point of going into perpetual exile? What additional sacrifice can he require?— I know not:

but I tremble, and shall not feel my mind at ease till I am safe on ship-board — What ! — on board that ship which is to transport me to where a boundless extent of ocean will separate Emily from her abandoned sister ! — Ah ! excuse, my dear Dorothy, excuse the gloomy presages which hover around my frightened imagination.

Cruel Varmont ! he looks forward to my death ! perhaps he wishes for it — he wishes for it, as the opportunity of robbing Bovile by an act of consummate villany ! — I shall communicate the whole affair to my husband. It is a duty I owe him. — Dorothy, my dearest Dorothy, the wind comes fair — the captains hurry the departure of the fleet — Adieu ! Adieu !

MURVILLE to VARMONT.

Chateaulin, 29th May, 7 in the evening.

SO! Monsieur Varmont!—How long is it since you have brought yourself to consent to remain in a town where I am, without paying me a visit? and how long is it since your hair, which I have seen of a bright red, has turned to a disgusting black?—In spite of your awkward disguise, I recognised you, Master Jupiter: and if you will inquire of your Mercury, Monsieur Laseur, he can tell you whether or not my eye possesses any skill in physiognomy.—He attempted to play off his lies and subterfuges, and would maintain to my face that I was mistaken in supposing I had seen either you or him. But

my cane, brandished over his shoulders, extorted from him the confession that he was the real Sofias, and that you were actually in Brest, as I had suspected, acting the part of Amphitryo. I hope, my dear friend, that you will not delay a moment to favour me with the name of the fair one who is the cause of your metamorphosis.

On the whole, however, your varlet of a footman concluded by putting a trick on me. He gave me a wrong direction! Last night I sought by you through the whole town; but you were no where to be found: and this morning before day-light, being recalled home by urgent business, I set out from Brest, wishing my slippery friend the worst of all possible success in his adventure.

You are surprised that I have as yet got no farther than Chateaulin? Let me tell you, then, that I seem born for fortunate adventures as well as you. At the break of day, between Brest and Doulas, I picked up a treasure — I found a charming young creature on the high road. — You will perhaps ask what brought her there? — My dear friend, she was on her way, gently and quietly, to — the other world: and, had not my postillion kept a watchful eye before him, he would have expedited her journey — he would have driven right over her. I should have been inconsolable for the accident. Only conceive, that, notwithstanding she was in a swoon, almost locked in the cold embrace of death, her hands smeared with blood, her face disfigured with scratches and bruises, she still dis-

played a thousand charms!... Surely, the sweet girl must, in her natural state, possess transcendent beauty! I

But, who had reduced her to the situation in which I found her?—Some savage beast, no doubt: for it is impossible that such charms as hers should not have disarmed the most barbarous of men.—To whom does she belong?—As yet I know not:—she cannot speak. But what I am most anxious to know, is, whether she be a maid or a wife. However, let her only recover speedily, and I shall speedily ascertain that point.

In expectation of that happy moment, and with a view to expedite its arrival, I took the fair wanderer into my post-chaise. A relay of horses was in readiness for me beyond Doulas; and moreover, I should not have been able to find a surgeon in that wretched village: I therefore drove on to Chateaulin, where I write you these lines near the bed-side of my fair patient. — She shows little sign of recovery.

Already can I communicate to you a very singular incident — While writing, I pronounced your name — She repeated it. — Eager to hear the first words she should utter, I flew to the bed-side. She seemed to collect all her strength in order to view me with attention — but uneasiness and anxiety were strongly depicted in her counte-

nance. "Varmont!" said she: "You know him then?"

"He is," replied I, "my intimate friend."

Suddenly she turned to the other side of the bed, as if afraid of me.

"Are you, then," resumed I, "acquainted with Varmont?"

I received no answer: the poor girl was incapable of speech. But, notwithstanding her again falling into a swoon, the surgeon, who on examination does not find that she has received any dangerous wound, expects to restore her in a few days: and as to myself, I have already taken my resolution: — here I remain — await her recovery — take her

with me as soon as she can travel with safety:—she is well worth the trouble.

A-propos, Brest harbour has been all in an uproar last night. Some infernal villains had attempted to set fire to the fleet and convoy that were ready to sail. It is asserted that the Pallas was actually on fire, but that the vigorous exertions of the captain saved her. Bovile is a prodigy of vigilance and activity:—I do not love him—but I esteem him—and cannot help doing him justice. Happy would it be for him, if all his enemies were like me:—they are numerous, and implacable in their hatred. I own to you, that, when I was quitting Brest, I could plainly perceive in the captains of the ships of war a disposition of mind

which prefaged no good to him. I would bet a hundred to one that he will not make a fuccesful cruife. And indeed what could have induced your father to pick up a man from a merchant fhip, to incorporate him with us, to promote him over all our heads, and fupport him in the rank of captain, in fpite of wind and tide? To render a man fervices in fuch a way, is in fact condemning him to be, fooner or later, thrown overboard like another Jonas.

Oh! I had nearly forgotten to tell you that I was informed one of the merchant fhips was blown up. But I prefume it was only the exaggerated account of unfounded rumour. Be that as it may, I was preffed by urgent bufinefs, and had not time to go down to the harbour, and inquire into the

particulars. The Pallas was safe; the rest of the convoy was uninjured: that was the most material point: the ship blown up was only a merchantman! and commercial affairs do not concern me.

Adieu: I am now going to feel my patient's pulse. If she was not delirious when she repeated your name, — if she is really acquainted with you, — I shall apprise you of the circumstance. On your part, you must inform me what kind of woman she is — what is the most advantageous mode of conducting my attacks — and what hopes I may entertain of success. — But you need give yourself no trouble on that head. I hope, that, by the time your answer comes, there will no longer be any *hope* in the case. I am not fond of

tedious sieges ; I always like to carry a fort by storm.

As you have so snugly concealed yourself in Brest, I shall not send this letter to that town—I direct to you, as usual, at Paris.

MURVILLE TO VARMONT.

Chateaulin, May 30.

I BELIEVE she knows you : but I think she does not love you : I suppose you have played her some wicked trick.

She passed the whole night in a very feeble and dejected state. Those who attended her could not understand the incoherent discourses which she uttered with a feeble and scarcely audible voice. Sometimes, however, in those short intervals when the paroxysms of fever gave her an increase of strength, she was heard to cry out " Fire ! Fire !" and suddenly, with strange inconsistency, she complained of a villain who was

“ attempting to murder her, and throwing her into the water.”

That some daring youth should have attempted to set her in flames, is what I can readily conceive—I well conceive what kind of flames they were: and, provided he has not succeeded, I pardon him.— But, to murder her! to drown her! to destroy that master-piece of nature’s art, and consign it to a watery grave!—if there exist in the whole universe a man capable of harbouring the black design, ’tis with reason she calls him a “villain.” And, till the actual existence of such a monster is undeniably proved to me, I will, for the honour of the human race, maintain it to be impossible.

Can you be acquainted with any

wretches of that description — you, Varmont, whose name she cannot hear mentioned without shuddering? — I do not think it in the smallest degree probable. But I think it extremely probable that you may have innocently formed designs against what she, I presume, like other girls, calls her honour. I suppose too, that, as you are not an adept in the art of pleasing, your awkward advances were harshly rejected: and then, my friend, you were over-hasty in calling in to your aid the application of that maxim which I know to be a favourite one with you, — though, between you and me, I think it favours a little of the ruffian, — that, “where gentle methods fail, force may be employed.” In such a situation, I presume that the terrified fair one, seeing no door open for her escape, jumped

out of the window. If unfortunately any other accident befel her on the high road where I found her, and at such an early hour, she will certainly inform me of it. But as to those flames which surround her — those waves which pursue her — that ruthless murderer who stabs her — all that is the mere production of the fever. It is well known what gloomy pictures the mind portrays, when the body is affected.

This morning she had just opened her eyes, and recovered her recollection, when I revisited her chamber. She asked me where we were.

“At Chateaulin, Madam,” replied I.

“Let me be conveyed to Brest,” cried she.

"It is impossible, Madam, absolutely impossible to convey you thither in your present state."

"Should inevitable death be the consequence, I am determined to re-join the fleet."

"The fleet has already sailed."

"Sailed!" exclaimed she with a shriek, and instantly fainted away.

This evening, she again asked me where she was.

"At Chateaulin, Madam."

"But, Sir, who are you?"

"My name is Murville."

Like an echo which only catches the last syllables, and again and again repeats them, she several times pronounced " . . . ville ! . . . ville !" collected all her remaining strength, — half raised herself in the bed — and, leaning on her elbow, presented to my view her charming figure. She fixed her eyes on me, with a look — such a look as pervaded and melted the very soul within me. Her countenance did not, as yesterday, exhibit the expressions of terror, but of eagerness and joy : — " . . . ville ! . . . ville !" said she, in a most enchanting tone of voice — " I heard only half the name : pray, repeat it."

" Murville, Madam."

Fatigued, probably, with this first effort, she could not long bear the extreme attention which she paid to me :

I saw her suddenly sink, and again fall into a swoon.

Perhaps it is more natural to suppose that the charming girl has some attachment — I cannot pretend to say of what kind — but, to a certainty, it is an attachment to some happy man whose name rhimes with mine. If that be the case, so much the better : it is already, in the outset, a most fortunate coincidence ; and with joy I hail the happy omen.

Your name, my dear friend, does not sound so agreeably to her ear : you may judge from the following circumstance —

A while ago, in tears, "The fleet," said she — "the fleet has failed?"

" Yes, Madam."

" What ! all the ships ? all the captains ?"

" Every one."

" Then nought remains for me but to die. I am now destitute of protection, destitute of assistance ! and into what hands am I fallen ?"

" Into those of a man of honour, who solemnly swears that he will do you no harm."

" No harm ?" repeated she, — " Was I mistaken ? — Did I not hear you name a person . . . ?"

" Myself — Murville."

"And another besides."

"Another?"

"Ah! pray heaven that it was only the work of a disordered imagination, under the dreadful delirium I have suffered!—You did not, then, tell me, Sir, that you were the intimate friend of?"

"Of Varmont?—certainly, Madam, I told you so."

My dear friend, I am extremely sorry on your account: but I cannot help informing you of the circumstance—this is the second time she fainted away on hearing your name.

MURVILLE to VARMONT.

Chateaulin, May 31.

SHE does not love you—does not entertain the smallest spark of affection for you.—I here give you the substance of a conversation we had together.

“What injury have I ever done to you?” said she.

I thought she was delirious, and made her no answer.

“What injury,” said she again, “have I ever done to you, Monsieur de Murville, that I should thus be the object of your hatred?”

This was plainly addressed to me :—
I answered, “ You have never done
me any, Madam : and I am very far
from hating you.”

“ Why, then, do you conspire with
those cruel monsters who persecute me?”

“ I do not conspire with them, Ma-
dam :—I do not act in concert with
any one.”

“ What ! you are not then engaged
in forwarding the designs of another?”

“ No, I protest : I am only endea-
vouring to promote my own plans.”

“ How came I into your power?”

“ By chance. — I found you almost

lifeless on the highway. I took you under my protection, and have lavished every care and attention on you."

"From what motives?"

"Your condition excited my compassion: and I was charmed with your beauty."

"What! you do not intend to give me up to that man whose friend you are?"

You may observe by the way, my friend, that it was probably to spare herself the anguish of pronouncing your name, that she had recourse to a circumlocution.

"I would not," replied I, "give you

up to the most powerful monarch upon earth. Believe me, I should think myself supremely blest, if you would allow me to keep you to myself."

"And you would defend me against him?"

"Against the whole universe."

"Will you engage to do so?"

"I engage it: and pledge my word of honour to make good my promise."

At this moment, she seemed as if relieved from the pressure of a heavy burthen; but soon resumed an air of inquietude, and said—"Can I depend on the word of a man who is *his* friend?"

"I own, Madam, my character is not one of the most exalted : but it is superior to his."

"Bad indeed must be the man who is worse than he !"

These two last remarks of hers, especially, show that she is far from esteeming you : — a convincing proof that she knows you well. — So far for what concerns you : — I now return to my own affairs —

I again assured her in the most solemn manner that I would protect her against all mankind. — My repeated assurances of attachment at length calmed her uneasiness to such a degree, that, after a few hours, the surgeon pronounced her considerably better. The fever had

sensibly abated: she no longer appeared to labour under that continual anxiety, those agonising pangs, which had kept us in constant alarm, and doubtful whether she could recover: she still however suffered considerable bodily pain; and her mind appeared deeply affected by some hidden grief: — she wept, and lamented the departure of the fleet; and often uttered deep sighs.

Heark'ye, Varmont! you must no longer entertain any pretensions to her: for she most cordially detests you. But tell me, I pray you — setting all the little vanity of self-love apart — tell me, had you not in that fleet a happy rival to whom you were obliged to yield the preference?

To return to my patient — A single word — and what a word! — who could have foreseen so dreadful an accident? — A single word has again reduced her to her former melancholy condition. “ You are constantly talking of Brest,” said I: — “ is your family there?”

“ Ah!” cried she with a tone and air of the deepest distress, “ I have no longer any family.”

“ The fleet,” said I — “ is it your father that has failed in it?”

“ My father? Alas! death too soon deprived me of him!”

“ Your mother? — your brother?”

“ My brother! my brother!” repeat-

ed she in a voice expressive of horror and aversion. — Her countenance suddenly changed; and with a convulsive start she threw back her head, and stretched out her arms before her. At the same instant a flood of cold sweat bathed her forehead, and a deadly paleness overspread her features. — I thought she was on the point of expiring.

Hence, Varmont, it is evident, that, among the number of those whom she calls her persecutors, you are not the person she detests the most: — it is manifest that she has a brother whom she abhors: and all this begins to give me some uneasiness.

MURVILLE to VARFONT.

Langey, near Saumur, June 7.

I AM astonished at your silence: for I am sure you have every reason in the world to be satisfied with *my* conduct: — for three successive days, I regularly wrote to you by every post: and in taking leave of my host, I repeatedly requested that he would punctually forward to me without a moment's delay any letters from Paris which might come directed to me at his house: nevertheless I have not yet received a single line from you. Before I inquire into the circumstance which deprives me of the information that I expected from you, I consent again to honour you with some confidential communications.

You must first take the trouble of re-perusing my former letters : the present will then inform you that one part of my conjectures is fully confirmed, but that the other was wholly unfounded.

That formidable brother who alarmed me — it is he who has failed in the fleet which is the eternal burthen of her song : — it is for him her tears flow ; it is on him her affections are fixed. Thus you had no rival, it seems, in the fleet ; and the poor girl appears to have never had any other admirer than yourself. 'Tis a misfortune for her, who certainly deserved to fare better : — 'tis a lucky circumstance for me, who certainly cannot fail to gain by the comparison. — As to the name in which I found a lucky co-incidence because it rhimed with mine, I have even greater reason to

rejoice on that score than I was before aware of : — it is her own name — Ter-ville. But the most delightful circumstance of the whole is that she is unmarried. As to the rest, I hope, Monsieur Varfont, that, since you were foolish enough to let her slip through your fingers, she was wise enough to make her escape before you were able to accomplish what she calls your criminal design.

Ah the cunning gipsy ! It was probably with a view to spare herself the confusion of relating to me her own tribulations and your outrages, that she earnestly entreated me never to make you the subject of my discourse to her, — never even to mention your name in her presence. I promised to gratify her in that respect : but I am not to be im-

posed on thus: and, besides, I take it for granted, that, although her modest discretion conceals the particulars from my knowledge, your blunt frankness will inform me of the whole.

I have made another promise also — never to speak to you concerning her, — and, above all things, carefully to conceal from your knowledge the circumstance of her being at my country-seat. She expressed an eager desire to take refuge there, as soon as she was apprised of one particular which I did not think it necessary to keep secret from her — that you were not ignorant by what chance she had fallen into my hands. We did not arrive here till yesterday: we were obliged to travel slowly, as the sweet girl was all over pain. She is, however, considerably

better : her wounds begin to heal ; she sleeps well o' nights ; her fever is nearly gone, and her appetite is returning. Oh ! in a few days she will have recovered her health, her graces, her bloom ! I shall then behold her in all the splendor of her native beauty — I shall behold her worthy of me !

Would you think it, Varmont ? she has exacted from me a solemn promise that I would protect her until she is perfectly recovered ! Ah ! I intend to keep her under my protection much longer than that. And although I take the liberty of breaking my promise by informing you of her present abode and condition, it is only because I cannot see those inconveniences which she apprehends from such a communication. It is in fact impossible that

Varfont should be fufficiently unreafonable to refufe to bow to the fuperior influence of my ftars, whofe ascendant over his own is fingularly manifested in the prefent instance. It is impoffible that he fhould perfeveringly purfue to my very houfe a fine girl who has fled from his arms to throw herfelf into mine.

But can it be on account of my not fending her back to you, that you appear miffed with me? If you entertain fuch an extravagant idea, you deferve to be lampooned in every newspaper throughout the kingdom! Is it my fault that you have never in your whole life been able to win a woman's heart? And muft I, when I have a fair opportunity of gaining poffeffion of thofe hearts which you are unable to win — muft I be bound to reject them?

—What! Here is a girl whom you have terrified — tormented — martyred:— I, on the contrary, have encouraged — coaxed — prepared her! *You* would never make any thing of her: *I* shall soon be able to mould and fashion her as I please. In this case, it is your duty to show perfect resignation. I allow you to regret the prize, if that can afford you any consolation: but I desire that you will immediately renounce it. — Or, shall I give you a specimen of my strict impartial justice? — find me, if you can, any one unfortunate woman who shall prefer you to me — find me, this very day, such a silly creature — and this very day I resign her to you.

Come, come! my friend, give over your childish humours, and sit down to write me an answer.

— BOVILLE to MADAME D'ETIOLES.

Brest, 20th May, noon.

FORTUNE was weary of smiling on me, Eleonora; and the first reverse she had in reserve for me is so cruelly oppressive, that I have need of all my courage to sustain it.

Yesterday, we were on the point of setting sail, when the wind suddenly arose, and blew with such violence as to make us apprehend an approaching tempest. It was but a transient squall, which ought not to have alarmed us: but we were obliged to obey the signals, by which we were directed to drop anchor. The delay has cost us dear: there is every reason to suppose,

that, if we had sailed yesterday evening, our merchants would not this day have to regret the richest vessel of their whole fleet — nor I, to lament the loss of a more precious treasure, whose value I had already begun to feel, though but a few days in my possession. I —

In the dead of the night, a loud explosion was heard on board the Centaur, the vessel in which my wife was embarked: and it immediately blew up in a thousand pieces. Some of the flaming fragments fell into the Pallas, and set her on fire; nor was it without the utmost difficulty that my most active exertions saved her from being totally consumed. Figure to yourself my situation — conceive it in all its horrors. Already my beloved Emily was no more; and yet the safety of my ship

demanding my undivided attention. — Even now, even at the moment that I write you this account, I cannot, undisturbed by other cares, indulge my regret for the loss I have suffered. The public weal imperiously summons me — I must away — I must fulfil my duty.

This morning, while the Pallas was undergoing some repairs which the accident had rendered necessary, I came on shore. I every where made mournful but unavailing inquiries: none but dead bodies had been cast up by the tide: that of Emily was not even to be found.

Hapless woman! why did I not suffer her to remain in the cloister? By rescuing her from what she called “her

tomb," I only hurried her with greater speed and certainty to an untimely end. In embarking her on board that fatal ship, I placed her on the funereal pyre. All the precautions I had taken for her comfort or her safety, have only operated to her destruction. — Alas ! such is the wisdom and foresight of frail mortals !

One circumstance — little calculated to alleviate my affliction — is, that I think it extremely probable, that, among my numerous and implacable enemies, there are some so diabolically hardened in villany, as to stop at nothing, provided they can but gratify their revenge. They could not flatter themselves with the hope of beginning the conflagration in my own ship, where they well knew that my vigilance is ever on the watch:

but they hoped, that, from the Centaur, near which I was moored, the flames would communicate to the Pallas, and that I would prefer perishing on board rather than abandon my vessel. All these circumstances are, no doubt, dreadful to think on: but my conjectures already begin to assume the strongest appearance of certainty. Of all the crew and passengers on board the Centaur, only a single man escaped destruction: and it was a miracle that saved him, if we may believe his own account of the affair: but we are all fully convinced that he owes his preservation to a different cause — to his fears, which induced him to disobey his captain's orders, and jump into the sea, at the first appearance of danger. However that may be, his deposition is as follows —

He was asleep, as were the rest of the crew, when, during the dead of the night, a slight noise awaked him. He perceived, along-side the Centaur, a boat, in which was a single man; and he saw one of the passengers, who had come on board only the evening before, quit the ship and step into the boat. The deponent immediately gave the alarm; but in an instant the fire broke out in the ship, in different parts at the same time; and a dreadful explosion soon ensued, which blew up the vessel, although she had no ammunition or warlike stores of any kind on board.

Tell me now, Eleonora, whether the loss of the Centaur was not the consequence of an infernal plot, still more than of the unpardonable negligence of the captain. Tell me whether you do

not think it something more than probable that a conspiracy was formed for my destruction. Ah ! if my enemies only wished to see that stoicism with which they reproached me, bend under the pressure of adversity — the inhuman wretches have been but too successful : — my tears flow in abundance for my youthful bride so soon snatched from my esteem, from my homage — perhaps from my growing affection. — Alas ! she is no more ! she, who was one of the fairest ornaments of nature, only made her appearance on earth, and suddenly vanished from our sight, — only appeared for a while, to leave an eternal remembrance behind ; — like a rose, which we have seen in the fair morn of spring ready to unfold its bloom, and whose transient beauties we still regret amidst the frosts of winter. I weep — I

lament her charms, now for ever lost : and yet my eternal regret is due not so much to her accomplishments, her youth, her perishable beauty, as to that numerous assemblage of substantial and amiable virtues, which adorned her heart. — I had married her before I was acquainted with her worth : but, since you were in the possession of another man, how long might I have searched before I could have made so good a choice ! — I weep ! — but reflect, Eleonora, that there are certain misfortunes, which the greatest firmness is too feeble to oppose : — reflect that Bovile stands in need of the consolations of friendship.

VARMONT to MURVILLE.

Paris, June 11.

A BELOVED brother! — a fleet the burthen of the song! — a rival on board the fleet! — a lady escaped! — confound me if I understand a single syllable of all this nonsense!

Your fair Terville has had her tribulations and her wounds? So much the worse for her. — She sleeps well o' nights, and is recovering her appetite? So much the better for you. — Of her charms and her returning health, make whatever advantage you please — whatever you can — I care not: — and may I die if I ever so much as heard of her before!

In this, however, as in every thing else, my "blunt frankness" is determined to have no further connection with your impertinent folly, Sir. I have a hundred times told you, and I now seriously repeat it, that you assume towards me very insolent airs, to which I am resolved not to submit.—On the whole, it appears that you have written me, from the Lord knows where, several letters prior to that which now lies before me. I have not received them—and I by no means regret their miscarriage.

MURVILLE to VARMONT.

Langey, near Saumur, June 12.

AH! ha! you disown the fair one, and are got into a passion! I see you are more deeply in love than I had suspected. But I am not surprised that you should — and I excuse you: for even I myself am actually tempted a hundred times a day to fall into the same snare.

What a charming girl! she has an air of candor and modesty, which would please me more, if it gave me less uneasiness. And then, she appears so grateful for my care — so delighted, so charmed with every instance of attention or regard. — How can I possibly reveal to her that my conduct is so far

from being disinterested? — I should take a pleasure in hearing the expressions of her gratitude, if she did not constantly accompany them with assurances of her esteem, — which begins to be a dreadful burthen upon me. What an intolerable weight on the shoulders of a man of pleasure, is the esteem of a virtuous woman! — for virtuous she certainly is virtuous? — aye, as much so, as I am the reverse.

When not in her company, I am myself again, and resume my natural disposition. I then form the most admirable plans for the reduction of the fort — plans, sometimes, of as violent a nature as any that you have ever formed in similar cases. But no sooner does she make her appearance, than I am confounded — wrapt in the mute con-

temptation of her charms — those charms which her yet imperfect convalescence already shows to be far superior even to the exalted idea I had conceived of them. — Confused — unable to utter a syllable — I view — I admire — and am content!

But of what can I accuse myself? Can I do better? Is the favourable moment yet arrived? Certainly not. The poor girl is yet in a very low and feeble state: to commence the attack under such circumstances, would be attempting to carry the fort by storm instead of surrender.

I acknowledge however that her presence confounds me. If she speaks a word, I am disconcerted: — If she looks at me, I am melted: the agitation of

my senses is instantly dissipated ; and I no longer feel any other than those foolish emotions — those emotions which proceed from the heart. What magic powers she possesses ! what a crowd of tumultuous passions are immediately calmed by the single sound of her enchanting voice ! what a host of bold resolutions are instantly put to flight by one timid look of hers ! what powers she derives from her very weakness !

Gracious heaven ! what is this I have written ? I am terrified at the idea. I see, 'tis all over with me ! alas ! I am undone ! I am — fairly in love — yes ! as deeply enamoured as certain folks who have so often been the objects of my ridicule. I suppose I shall soon be reduced to the happy condition of those tender swains who, for whole

weeks together, vent their platonic love in sighs, and run from house to house, entertaining every body they meet, with a long history of the innocence, the cruelty, and the chastity of their fair inamoratas!

No, no! Madam! *you* shall love in *my* way, — or, by Jove, I'll send you back to Monsieur Varfont. *He* is the man to attack you to some purpose: — *he* will not be deterred from the attempt by your timid dejected looks.

But I am astonished at what I have been doing! What a long letter I have scribbled without coming to the point! I simply intended to return a few words of answer to your polite epistle. I am not much surprised that you should declare yourself unable to un-

derstand my last letter. The case is this — my rascal footman, who had the charge of carrying my letters to the post-office while at Chateaulin, instead of executing my commands, spent the time in a tavern treating an old acquaintance of his. I have this moment searched the fellow's pockets, and found the three letters still in his possession. I forward them with this. On reading them, my dear friend, you will be convinced that Mademoiselle Terville, who has so completely stolen my heart, is certainly a lady of your acquaintance — and that any further dissimulation would be wholly useless. — As to the rest, I make no doubt, that, after a few moments' reflection, you will get the better of that little fit of peevishness which has come upon you. If, nevertheless, you are abso-

absolutely determined to persevere in it, and to take the matter seriously, I leave you at perfect liberty to indulge your own inclinations.

EMILY to DOROTHY.

Langey, near Saumur, June 13.

YES, 'tis Emily who writes to you —
'tis Emily, whom the immediate hand
of providence has rescued from the
most imminent dangers.

Recollect, that, —alarmed at the
sight of my brother, and especially by
the perusal of your letter which in-
formed me of his mysterious departure,
—I was anxiously impatient for the
moment when I should embark on
board that ship which appeared my on-
ly safe asylum. How little did I think
that it was in that very spot the snares
of death were spread around me !

In the midft of them I nevertheless yielded to the influence of fleep, — but what a fleep ! what dreams haunted my imagination ! An affaffin, me-thought, brandifhing over my bofom the uplifted dagger, demanded my life and my fortune. It was the very identical young man whom I had feen from my window in the ftreets of Brest : but the falfe colouring of his hair no longer deceived me — his hair was now red — and his hands too. Gracious God ! his murderous hands were embrued in my blood.

Suddenly a dreadful uproar awaked me — the fhip was all in flames — I called on Bovile — Bovile could neither hear my voice, nor give me affiftance. — My terror increafing as rapidly as the conflagration, I attempted to efcape

from the fire, and rushed into the waves. The sea, at that moment very boisterous, rolled immense billows: twenty times was I sunk in the abysses of the deep, and as often heaved up again on the surface of the waters. At length dashed against a boat, I grasped its side, and implored the aid of two men whom I perceived in it, to help me on board. One of them stretched out his hand to my assistance: — the other Oh Dorothy! I am unable to hold the pen the other ah! tell me, my dearest Dorothy — in pity, tell me, that, although threatened by a real danger in the midst of the angry waves which loudly claimed their devoted prey, — yet, tormented by my gloomy presages — haunted by the ideas of a sinister dream — I could fancy an imaginary enemy and imaginary perils. En-

deavour to persuade me, that, in the frightful disorder of my senses, I may have mistaken, if not the dreadful words which you shall presently read, at least the voice that uttered them. — Yes, Dorothy — I shudder at the recital — I recognised — or, if you choose, I thought I recognised that unnatural youth who had lately come so often within so short a time to inform me, in Madame Varmont's name, that I also was destined to end my days in a cloister. And his words — I but too distinctly heard them — his words were — “What are you doing? — 'Tis she perhaps! — push her back! strike!” — Oh Dorothy! these terrible words resound in my ears a hundred times a day — and a hundred times a day 'tis the voice of Varmont that pronounces them!

Believe me, Dorothy, my suspicions, dreadful as they must appear to you, are but too well founded — so well indeed, that I shall never be tempted to clear them up. Ah! I conjure you that the detestable secret may remain for ever buried in your bosom and mine, nor ever escape to the ear of a third person.

I am unable to proceed, my dearest Dorothy — I am so weak and faint. And that cruel scene, which I have been obliged to retrace in all its horrors, has still farther exhausted and overpowered me. — You will not receive this intelligence so soon as I could wish: for I must not trust any person to carry it to the post-office: and heaven knows when I shall have recovered sufficient strength to carry it thither myself.

MURVILLE TO DOLERVAL.

Langey, near Saumur, June 13.

HA! good morrow to you, my dear little brother! 'tis almost an age since you have written to me. What! are you so taken up with music, painting, geography, botany, and I know not how many other trifling pursuits, as not to have a single moment to spare?— If I indeed should sometimes forget to write to you, it were an excusable neglect, since my attention is daily engaged by such important objects — and especially, let me tell you, at this particular time. — My head is at this moment filled, as I hope my arms will soon be, with the virgin beauties of a handsome young girl of sixteen.

How you would admire her! how you would love her! She seems to possess in an eminent degree that over-refined sensibility of which our unfortunate sister is so full, and of which you also possess a very plentiful portion, — you, my poor Dolerval, in whose countenance it is perceivable at half a mile's distance. But do you know what a silly appearance it gives you? I declare I am often tempted to suspect that you must in reality be possessed of twice as much sense as I, since, notwithstanding that air of sheepish simplicity, you still display so great a stock of it.

But to return to the dear girl — for, in spite of my utmost efforts, I can talk of no other object — Rejoice, my dear brother — exult — there does ex-

ist in the world one virtuous girl — so virtuous and so modest, as to divert and yet terrify me — timid moreover — as timid as Dolerval in company with a young lady. — Between you both, there is one thing which I am quite at a loss to divine — whether it is you that ape her virgin airs, or she that has stolen them from you. When I contemplate her, I can scarcely persuade myself that she is only a copy from you: and yet when I recollect the simplicity of your manners, I fear that you are the original. I should be curious to see you both tête-à-tête together: — I think you would be the best matched pair in the universe, and a charming subject for the painter's pencil. 'Pon honour, she would suit you to a hair, Dolerval — so perfectly suit you, that, if I were a little less captivated with her myself, I

would send her to you by the stage-coach to-morrow morning.

But it is impossible, my friend:—I have already proceeded so far, that I cannot think of stopping my career, while the road lies so level and open before me. It was this morning I first ventured to make overtures to her.—Her testifying no surprise on the occasion, is a circumstance which I think of little moment:—but that she should express no anger or resentment,—that indeed gives me no small degree of uneasiness:—I could more successfully encounter her anger, than her calm confidence. Besides, she immediately launched forth in an imposing strain,—a discourse full of noble sentiments.—I, on the other hand, protested my profound veneration for exalted

virtues, but at the same time acknowledged myself utterly incapable of attaining to such heroism. The presumptuous girl briefly replied, that she esteemed me too highly to despair of being able to teach me the practice of them. — Tell me, Dolerval, are modesty and virtue of an infectious nature? You ought to know it, you who are so full of them.

A-propos! I spoke of virgin airs and simplicity — well, how do you proceed? are you almost tired of them yet? — What an exalted being you are! a perfect Joseph! — What a memorable example you will leave to this depraved generation, when, at the age of eighteen, you perish — the victim of inviolate chastity!

It is the track of your romantic sister that you so gravely pursue:—but as she is also *my* sister, I wish, as a proof of my affection for her, to give her a friendly caution to take a different road.—Be it known to her then, that, when an antiquated bachelor marries a young girl, he ought certainly to make up his mind before-hand, and reconcile himself patiently to endure a certain misfortune—the slightest of those which are attached to the marriage-state;—and that

Tell her this from me, d'ye mind?—let her impress it

deep on her memory, and be thoroughly convinced of the truth of the maxim. The consequence will naturally be, that Monsieur Bovile — who is, no doubt, a very amiable man, since you pronounce him so — will, on his return, be a very happy man. Monsieur D'Etioules will lose nothing by this arrangement: — his wife will materially gain by it; and we shall no longer have the mortification of seeing her wither away in youth. — Quick! quick! let her determine without delay. She should have settled all these matters seven years ago.

You see, Dolerval, I do not lose sight of your interests or those of my sister. — I give you both abundance of excellent advice: but I expect that you will on your part act in the same manner towards me: — let me be favoured

with your ideas respecting the conduct I should pursue towards Mademoiselle Terville. Come, let me hear it would you advise me to use compulsion if gentler methods fail? Let me have your opinion on the subject, I pray you. Varmont will soon communicate his; and I wish that his letter may not anticipate yours. But I already foresee what advice each of you will give: — he will recommend the most outrageous proceedings — you will advise me to proceed in a mawkish sneaking manner. — Well! I know that wisdom lies between the two extremes. I shall, therefore, between the two roads severally pointed out by you and him, choose the middle path, that will conduct me to happiness, which is the invariable object of wisdom. And when, in that track, my efforts shall have been crown-

ed with success, I shall then take the liberty of telling Varmont that he was a sad dog—and you, Dolerval, that you were a milk-sop.

Adieu, my dear brother! receive the assurances of my tender affection, and present them to my sister, — yes, of my tender affection: for though I cannot help occasionally laughing at the extravagance of your notions and hers, I nevertheless love you both from the bottom of my heart.

EMILY to DOROTHY.

Langey, near Saumur, June 14.

WELL! I have at length recovered a little strength. — Do you, Dorothy, summon up all yours; for I have new crimes to relate.

The inhuman wretch who had pronounced my doom — seeing that his accomplice, less cruel than himself, was slow in executing the sentence — prepared to strike the fatal blow with his own hand. I saw a weapon brandished over my head: — I let go my hold, and, to save my life from the savage cruelty of a barbarian, committed it to the fury of the waves, less cruel than he. I was not far from the beach: a

furge threw me on it — another swept me back — at length I was cast on shore, almost expiring. Nevertheless — such wonderful efforts is nature capable of exerting under imminent danger — I still collected sufficient strength to escape from the spot where I dreaded to fall again into the hands of an inhuman parricide. On foot, exhausted as I was, I crept forward for near an hour, still retiring from the shore, and advancing into the country, as well to avoid meeting with my brother, as in expectation of falling in with some strangers, whose assistance I hoped I should not implore in vain. Provided I could but escape from the merciless Varmont, the whole world besides had at that moment no terrors for me. Accordingly, I thought myself in safety, as soon as I perceived

that I was on the public road. At that moment, as the idea of my perils vanished, my little remaining strength forsook me: and scarcely had I advanced ten steps on the high road, when I fell senseless to the ground. Adieu, my dear sister! my eyes grow dim — my hand shakes — I stand in need of rest.

DOLERVAL to MURVILLE.

Tours, June 15.

STILL the same man, Murville! why sign your name to your letter? The matter and the style would have sufficiently told me who was the writer. At first I laughed at your epistle. But Eleonora, who gave me a very serious comment on it, made a deep impression on my mind. My sister professes principles diametrically opposite to yours: and it is for that reason, I suppose, that she always displays a greater share of eloquence than you do of wit.

You laugh at my sensibility! but are you ignorant that to it I am indebted

for the most refined pleasures that I ever enjoy? From it my innocent studies derive undescribable charms: by it I am taught to indulge the most delightful rêveries as I saunter over our smiling plains: — without it, my heart would perhaps not melt to pity in the cottage of misery and distress: — without it, I should seldomer mingle my tears with those of my sister, whose secret anguish I have often soothed and alleviated. — Can your pleasures be more lively than mine? At least I am told they will be less durable, and that they will leave a lasting regret and repentance behind.

My poor sister! she is at this moment sunk in the deepest affliction. Monsieur Bovile, whose acquaintance would be a valuable acquisition to you — Monsieur Bovile, whom long separation has

not rendered less dear to her, — has just married the sister of a man with whom it is impossible that you should long continue in habits of friendship. But what am I to think of that passion, called love, which is capable of disturbing the purest souls, and producing a sudden change in the most amiable dispositions? what am I to think of that dreadful passion, which, even in the bosom of Eleonora, bears so strong a resemblance to envy? — What! shall my sister wish to debar another from the possession of that object which she is herself unable to obtain?

As to Mademoiselle Terville, the manner in which you ask my opinion respecting the conduct to be pursued towards her, does not perhaps leave me at liberty to give any advice, even indi-

rectly. I will tell you nevertheless, that if chance presented to my view such an angel as you describe her, I should immediately feel a double delight in the consciousness of possessing a heart sufficiently full of sensibility to adore, according to her deserts, a woman who is worthy of the universal homage of mankind. Then, timid and respectful in her presence, I would with the most anxious caution avoid even the slightest occasion of offending or displeasing her : — I would exert every effort to win her affections. And perhaps I should succeed — should obtain a wife worthy of my adoration — and my sister a friend worthy of her esteem and confidence ! — Ah ! what greater blessing could be wished for by the happiest of brothers, the happiest of husbands ?

EMILY to DOROTHY.

Langey, near Saumur, June 15.

THE catalogue of my misfortunes was not yet filled up, Dorothy. I was destined to endure at the same time the most excruciating bodily pains, and the most racking anxiety of mind.

Judge how poignant my anguish, when, on recovering my senses, I heard a person by my bed-side distinctly pronounce the detested name of Varmont ! I fancied myself once more fallen into the power of my enemy. The fever which boiled within my veins became more violent ; and, during the continuance of a long delirium, no other object presented itself to my imagina-

tion than the figure of my intended murderer, who incessantly threatened me with his gesture and his voice. — Once indeed — but I shall long cherish the delightful recollection — I fancied I heard the name of Bovile. — I flattered myself that my deliverer was restored to me, and that I should soon be relieved from all my sufferings. — Alas ! too soon I learned that the fleet had failed, — and that the young man who had taken me up on the high road, was the friend of Varmont. — I was near expiring with grief.

Meantime, how was I to act in so critical a situation ? — To relate my misfortunes, and disclose my name, would have been revealing a crime, and pointing out Varmont as the author. Presumptions might have led to proofs : —

and what a dreadful doom would in that case overtake the criminal! It is true indeed that by thus acting towards him with a degree of tenderness to which he was certainly not entitled, I ran very great risks: But, on the other hand, would it have been safe to reveal my history? What reasons could I have alleged, sufficiently plausible to induce that friend of Varmont to conceal from him that his sister was escaped from shipwreck? Must I reveal to him the dreadful tale? — No considerations of personal safety could ever prevail on me to make the disclosure: — the more enormous the crime, the more I thought it my duty to endeavour to cover it with an impenetrable veil, even though I should one day fall a victim to that imprudent generosity which impelled me to pardon the

guilty wretch who had conspired against his sister's life.

In order, therefore, to remove all suspicion, I told him falsehood after falsehood : — I told him that I was unmarried, — that my name was Terville, — that the person whose departure in the fleet I so bitterly lamented, was a beloved brother ! — A beloved brother ! Gracious heaven ! why did you not grant me such a brother, as I might think on without hatred ? — Finally, with respect to Varmont, I keep his near relation to me a secret, and suffer it to be understood that he has excited my aversion by tormenting me with his criminal addresses.

MADAME D'ETIOLES to BOVILE.

Tours, June 13.

YES, I am convinced, Bovile, that you do in fact stand very much "in need of the consolations of friendship." But was it handsome in you to solicit them in so cruel a manner as you have done? In addressing your lamentations to Madame D'Etiolés, was it right so far to forget your Eleonora, as to oblige her to read every thing that you have written to her? How happy, even in the shades of death, is that Emily, whom her virtues — inimitable virtues, it seems — rendered so dear to you, and whose all-powerful charms had suddenly inspired you with a "growing affection!" How happy is she! after having

been your bride for at least a few days, she now enjoys your most tender regret! Ah! consent in favour of one to whom you were no less dear than to her — consent to bear up against a loss which you deem irreparable. Endeavour to support the burthen of life: — perhaps you cannot, without a certain degree of ingratitude, refuse that consolation to an unfortunate woman, whose tender affection for you — an affection undivided by any other object — must have been to her a source of unceasing woes.

EMILY to DOROTHY.

Langey, near Saumur, June 25.

AT present, my situation and my plans are as follow :— I am already too well acquainted with the excellence of my husband's heart, to suspect that indifference to me was the cause of his departure. No doubt, Bovile poignantly regrets his wife, whom he considers as irrecoverably lost. But could he, however deep his sorrow, avoid setting out on an expedition which he thinks of high importance to the success of the Gallic arms? Bovile could not for a moment harbour such a thought : he is not of a disposition to hesitate or demur when his duty is in question. — As for myself, I intend, as soon as recovered

from my present indisposition, to return to Brest, and there again embark :— Monsieur Murville will certainly not refuse to supply me with the necessary means. I can easily meet my husband at Martinique, where I know the fleet is to remain stationed for some time. There I shall defy the dark plots of Varmont. Varmont, whom his friend too hastily informed of his having found a young woman nearly expiring at a small distance from the shores of Brest, may suspect that I am still alive : but, if I can depend on Monsieur Murville's solemn assurances, at least my enemy does not know in what particular spot his intended victim lies concealed.

I had nearly forgotten, Dorothy, to inform you of a disagreeable incident which increases the difficulties of my

situation, already so cruelly perplexing. This young Murville, amorous and inflammable, has made me strange proposals! — I am well aware that appearances, which are much against me, seem to afford an excuse for his conduct. The unaccountable mysteriousness with which I conceal from him the events that conducted me to the spot where he found me, leaves a wide field for his imagination. Besides, when he sees me so young — and especially if he thinks me possessed of any beauty — can he possibly guess of what nature were the attempts made upon me by that Varmont for whom I appear to entertain so strong an aversion? I think nevertheless that this young man ought to pay more respect to my misfortunes, from whatever cause he may have reason to suppose they originated. Perhaps

indeed I might excuse him for withholding his esteem, since he is as yet so slightly acquainted with me: but I cannot pardon his want of delicacy, in wishing to take a dishonourable advantage of that chance which has intrusted to his care the fate of an unfortunate woman.

MADAME D'ETIOLES TO MURVILLE.

Tours, June 17.

MURVILLE! ah, Murville! to you
I unbosom myself in my deep affliction:
take pity on your sister's distress.

A dreadful report is in circulation.
'Tis said that the English have beaten
our fleet which lately sailed from Brest.
The account adds that the Pallas was
sunk. — Bovile Bovile, then, is
no more?

Make, my dear brother, I earnestly
conjure you, — make, without a mo-
ment's delay, the most diligent inqui-
ries. Haste to communicate to me the
result — make all possible haste. The

cruel state of uncertainty in which I have been since yesterday, is insupportable: I should prefer death itself, as a relief from it.

Above all things, Murville, keep my secrets. The Almighty sees and hears me; — he knows that I never had any secret which need cause me a blush: — but mankind are so unjust! they make no distinction between an involuntary attachment and a premeditated intrigue: they blame a hapless woman, instead of commiserating her misfortune, and pass as severe a condemnation on struggling virtue as upon yielding weakness. They would only consider the unlawfulness of my passion: they would shut their eyes to the variety of motives which justified it, — the unceasing efforts that I

have made to subdue to it — and the many pangs it has cost me.

Let such cruel judges, therefore, never learn by what devouring flame I was consumed during life, nor by what sorrow I was prematurely hurried to my grave. Alas! when you and the rest of my family forced me to give my hand and my fortune to a stranger, would to heaven you had been able to force me to give him my heart also!

VARMONT to MURVILLE.

Paris, June 17, midnight.

SCARCELY was my letter dispatched, my dear friend, when I repented of having written it. I request you will attribute the ill-humour which pervaded it, to no other cause than my deep chagrin at the recent loss I had suffered. I could not conceive that the lady you mentioned was in reality fallen into your hands. I imagined that you had only heard of my misfortune through the indiscretion of some of my acquaintance, and were disposed to rally me on the subject. Hence those hasty and passionate expressions, which I am very sorry to have used.

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Your letters moreover, which I received all at the same time, have sufficiently convinced me, that it would be improper to dissemble any longer with you. Receive then a confession which I was before ashamed to make. It is but too true that I am acquainted with Mademoiselle Terville: it is but too true that I have foolishly conceived for her that kind of affection, against which even you seem no longer able to guard your bosom. My dear friend, I acknowledge myself in love for the first time in my whole life: — and it is sufficient to say that I love to distraction.

Oh! how delighted I am with the happy chance which has thrown her into the hands of my best friend! I verily believe, Murville, had not fortune favoured me in that singular manner,

I should have died with grief and despair. Make haste, my friend, to restore me to perfect tranquillity, by sending me back the charming fugitive. — You are not as yet so desperately enamoured with her as I am: the happiness of your whole life does not depend on the possession of her. I, on the contrary, cannot help adoring her: I find it impossible to exist without her.

VARFONT TO MURVILLE.

(Note J.) Three o' clock in the morning,

I Confess, Murville, this is not the first time that you have given me reason to admire your penetration. It is very true, that, in the frantic excess of ardent love, I have treated the poor girl rather roughly. — I shall tell you the whole affair at another time when my mind is more at ease. — It is equally true that I never entertained the intention of doing her any real harm. — You found her face torn, and her hands bloody? — I assure you, my friend, it was not through my fault that you found her so. — She must have been — but you forgot to tell me that circumstance — benumbed with cold, and wet to

the skin. But that was owing to the mode of her escape: — she escaped from me almost by a miracle, and at the risk of being drowned a hundred times over. — You shall see how it was, when I inform you of the contrivance she put in practice. But she was too late in making her escape: she is already mine; and that is the reason why she detests me, or at least appears to detest me.

You know, my dear friend, that it is only at the first step a woman hesitates: and now that the ice is fairly broken, I am convinced she will not be sorry to find herself once more in my power. Nevertheless, as my sudden appearance might alarm her, I will so far restrain my impatience as not to go myself to receive her from you, but send

my trusty servant, Lafleur, whom I know to be devoted to my interest. You may safely deliver her into his hands:—you may, Murville, and you ought to do so. I again repeat that she is mine, and that it is utterly impossible for me to exist without her.

Now you know, my dear friend, that it is only at the first step a woman hesitates: and now that the ice is fairly broken, I am convinced she will not be sorry to find herself once more in my power. Nevertheless, as my sudden appearance might alarm her, I will so far restrain my impatience as not to go myself to receive her from you, but send

VARFONT to MURVILLE.

(Note II.) Five o'clock in the morning.

ONE thing makes me uneasy, Murville; and I request you to clear it up to me; for I cannot feel indifferent to any circumstance which relates to her. Are you perfectly certain that she loves her brother so much as she says? As to my part, I have reason to think that her chief motive for regretting his departure with the fleet, is that he was the only person in whom she expected to find a protector against me. I do not however mean to request that you should importune her with questions on that subject:—on the contrary, you will oblige me by never speaking to her about it:—but give me a faithful ac-

count of every thing she has already said respecting that brother. I wish to know whether he was really the person who rescued her from the perils by which she was surrounded: but as to the danger of assassination, you must be convinced that it was purely imaginary — the mere effect of raging fever and delirium: for where on earth could a monster be found, who were capable of attempting her life? He certainly must have been, as you observe in your letter, “a savage beast” — savage, indeed, beyond example, — and the most dull and stupid of the brutal race: for, in short, what being who wears the human figure, but must feel that nature never created so fine a girl for the purpose of assassination?

about it — but give me a faithful ac-
 count of me by never speaking to her

VARMONT to MURVILLE.

(Note III.) Seven o' clock in the morning.

I AM still uneasy about one particular, respecting which I request you will interrogate Mademoiselle Terville. Before you met with her, did she not fall into the hands of any other person? — I should be distracted at the idea that the smallest accident had happened to her; though, had that been the case, it was no more than she deserved: for, why make her escape when the worst was over? why elope from me? how snug she might be at present in the situation where I had placed her! — But you will certainly restore her to me: I shall presently call in Lafleur, whom I had sent out to reconnoitre: — to-morrow I

dispatch him to you: and do you, my friend, make no delay, but immediately surrender my *Dulcinea* into his hands. Her remaining longer in your possession would be attended with considerable danger to me: you would at length become quite enamoured with her yourself; and as I know your superiority over me, I dread the consequences of a comparison. The young lady, when once fully acquainted with the merits of *Murville*, would feel a still stronger repugnance to return to me. — Meanwhile, I thank you for not having told her that I am apprised of the place of her concealment: my plans will be much facilitated by her remaining ignorant that her charms are about to be restored to me. But be expeditious, *Murville*: there is not a moment to be lost: — you would certainly fall in love

with her — you would engage her affections in turn: and yet I again repeat to you that she is mine — that I adore her — and cannot exist without her.

MURVILLE to DOLERVAL.

Langey, 18th June, ten at night.

DOLERVAL, your poor sister wrote me yesterday a most melancholy letter, which has affected me to a degree that I cannot express. I felt myself strongly inclined to blubber like a child — although I thought I had so stoically fortified myself against such puerile weakness. Nevertheless, before I would yield to my feelings, I instantly dispatched my courier. The dog! it was well worth while indeed to founder me a pair of horses, and bring me such bad news!

It is indeed but too true that the Pallas went to the bottom. Those mis-

creant English saved only seventy of her crew : all the remainder of the sailors and marines, together with their captain, took a short trip in Charon's wherry, and are now safe at anchor in the Styx.

But this is not all. The disaster is imputed to the misconduct of Bovile : he is accused of having disobeyed the signals. — I cannot believe it : for Bovile has on many occasions afforded sufficient proofs of his respect for subordination. But he is now at the bottom of the sea, and can't speak a word in his own defence ; — *therefore* (you know) he *must* be in fault ! — Long ago and often have I said that admiral Varmont, who protected him, was guilty of an egregious blunder in promoting him. To introduce a plebeian into our royal

navy is like exposing a woman in the middle of a forest.

To complete the misfortune, that same accursed frigate which drowned my sister's inamorato, has also drowned the brother of my Dulcinea: and such was my stupidity and want of thought, that I interrogated the unlucky messenger in her presence! The consequence was that she immediately fainted away: and I presume the same intelligence will be a death-blow to my poor sister.

To charge you with communicating it to her, Dolerval, is imposing on you a melancholy office. But for me directly to send the mournful tidings, would be consigning her at once to hands of the undertaker. I depend on your tender

attention, gradually to prepare her for the disclosure of the whole of her misfortune. But such are the precious fruits of that virtue with which she is so much enamoured ! If your sister, instead of vainly sighing for Bovile during seven long years, had, in imitation of so many others, occasionally enjoyed a stolen interview with him, — he might, at the time of his late departure, have bid her adieu without leaving such a mortal load of regret behind. Or if her grief was so great as absolutely to stand in need of consolation, some tender-hearted youth might be found, who would take a pleasure in administering it : — and indeed what are young fellows good for, but to administer consolation to afflicted widows ? — But, with our Eleonora, there is no resource. The only comforter I have it in my power to

recommend to her, is yourself — her brother ! a poor comforter, indeed !

This puts me quite out of humour — especially as an accumulation of misfortunes have overpowered me all at the same time. You recollect, Doler-val, the charming girl I mentioned to you — the little angel, as you call her ! — That little angel, whose countenance and demeanour are so modest and chaste — whose looks are so timid, — she is not what I thought her ! I have just received a letter which informs me of the whole. After this, what female physiognomy can a man ever venture to trust ? I am mortified, I am incensed, beyond conception ! Ah ! Monsieur Varmont would do well to stand on his guard !

EMILY to DOROTHY.

Langey, 18th June, eleven at night.

AT length I enjoy a moment of peaceful solitude : at length I am at liberty to indulge my sighs and tears — and to commit the detail of my new sorrows and distresses to this paper which shall one day reveal to you the whole extent of my misfortunes.

My dear Dorothy, I had but one support remaining in the world — and that I have lost : — Bovile is dead !

Were you only to consider the situation into which I am plunged by his melancholy fate, perhaps you might excuse me if my grief was confined to

my own misfortune : perhaps you might think, that, in losing him with whom I had been united but for a moment, as it were, — and whose premature death leaves me at the mercy of my enemies, — I have less reason to regret him as a husband than as a protector. But, short as was the time of our union, Bovile had already impressed my heart with sentiments of the most lively gratitude, and the most tender esteem. And how soon does adversity teach us to judge of mankind ! Can I — the sister of Varmont ! — the slave, the prisoner of Murville ! — can I be condemned for supposing that there exist few worthy characters among their whole sex ? and have I not reason eternally to regret the loss of him who has been snatched away from my affection ?

So dreadful, however, is my present condition, that I am almost as cruelly tormented by my anxious fears, as by my bitter regret. Oh Dorothy ! what shall become of your Emily ? Persecuted by the unrelenting hatred of Madame Varmont, — saved only by a miracle from the blood-thirsty rage of an unnatural brother, — a widow almost as soon as married, — forced to conceal the name of my family and that of my husband, — destitute of every resource — possessing neither strength nor experience, — what use shall I make of that fatal liberty which is now fallen to my lot ? Alas ! would it, then, have been better for me to have lived in eternal slavery, such as you are doomed to groan under ?

But why do I talk of liberty ? I do

not enjoy it, my dear Dorothy. This Murville detains me a prisoner: — such is the advantage he takes of the weakness of my sex, and the wretchedness of my forlorn condition! I hope nevertheless that the Almighty Being who stretches forth his powerful arm to succour and protect the oppressed, did not rescue me from the dagger of a parricidal brother, to leave me in the hands of a destroyer of female honour. Let me but recover a little strength, and I shall find means to elude the vigilance my tyrant jailor. I'll try, I'll examine, I'll inquire. — Surely I shall at length succeed: — or am I to suppose that there existed but a single man upon earth, who was possessed of delicacy and generosity? am I to despair of ever finding a second Bovile? I certainly do not intend to solicit the mortifying pity

pity of any human being : — but why should I blush to implore the humane sympathy of those whose bosoms glow with genuine sensibility? And besides, shall I not be able to maintain myself by the work of my own hands, as so many others do? The most laborious employment would not terrify me : after having once had the courage to undertake it, habit would soon reconcile me to it. In short, I feel myself capable of enduring every thing except the shame and infamy attendant on vice. Do not, therefore, Dorothy, be uneasy on my account : a ray of returning hope suddenly beams upon my mind : and, happen what may, my patience will never forsake me.

MURVILLE to VARМONT.

Langey, June 19, midnight.

SHE is yours? the outrage is completed? her charms are blasted? Well, take her back! I do not wish to detain her: she is no longer worthy of my regard. Let your ambassador make his appearance. I shall immediately deliver up to him your fugitive sultana, — and only wish that a troop of ugly hobgoblins may carry off the stupid Vandal who carried her off from you.

MURVILLE to VARMONT.

20th June, five in the morning.

WHAT! you really had the heart to profane such charms? her timid modesty, her maiden innocence, could not repress your licentious desires? The entreaties, the affecting tears of youthful beauty, were incapable of melting your heart? — But why do I talk of entreaties and tears? — You ought, Madam, you ought to have called in the aid of pinching, scratching, biting, screaming — even swearing, if necessary! You should have struggled like a Fury — you should — yes, you should have suffered death itself, rather than submit to such treatment Instead of that, you only fly when the mischief is done! — Then,

Madam, notwithstanding all the penetration and sensibility that beam in your sparkling eyes, I must pronounce you a downright simpleton !

But, no ! 'tis you alone, unrelenting Varmont, that are to blame : — you alone are guilty. How, I ask, how could so feeble and delicate a creature resist, even for a few minutes, the efforts of your superior strength ? You overpowered her, — you murdered her — yes, you committed murder in the literal sense of the term — downright premeditated murder ! — poor girl ! charming creature, worthy of a better fate ! When in imagination I view the particulars of the transaction, my blood boils with rage ! Yes, in those moments, I would be willing enough to send her back to you : but at the same

time I would snatch up my sword, and plunge it to the hilt in your bosom.

Acts of violence — black, villanous deeds — are all that you, and men like you, are capable of. You issue your commands, when you ought to employ solicitation: — you seize by force what you ought to obtain by concession! — Glorious exploits to boast of! — A common drayman would in that particular rival the best among you.

— But to sooth the grief of a tender fair one, in order to lull her vigilance — to offer incense to her vanity, in order to lead her astray — to flatter her prejudices, in order to overcome them — to pay homage to her virtue, in order to render it more tractable —

to excite her gratitude by acts of seeming kindness — her tenderness by a counterfeit sensibility — her confidence by a well-feigned respect — her generosity by a boundless disinterestedness — even her desires by transports sometimes suddenly discovered, but immediately repressed — gradually to kindle in her youthful heart a devouring flame — and at length to reduce the charming maid, not simply to surrender, but to give, to throw herself into your embraces, and voluntarily to bless you with full possession of her charms — *that* is the master-piece of our art — and that is what I hope to achieve.

I am well aware that it will be a tedious task : but, every thing considered, I have ample time to accomplish it. I have already had a sufficient num-

der of ordinary intrigues:—I am weary of them, and now wish to enjoy the peaceful sweets of an engagement of nearly a serious nature: I wish to try the effects of something nearly approaching to real love. And then what a glorious reward I shall receive for my toils! Never was a finer opportunity of trying the experiment on so charming a subject.

Thus, Varmont, you must plainly perceive, that to send me your confidential valet, would be sending him on a fruitless errand. It is impossible for me to think of surrendering her.

I fancy I already hear you exclaim against my conduct. But let us hear your arguments. — “You cannot exist without her?” — I know you too well,

Varmont — I know that the sight of another fair face will soon make you forget her ; whereas her image is indelibly fixed in my bosom, and in taking her from me, you would tear away a part of myself — my whole heart. — You are enamoured with her ? — I am a thousand times more so. I burn with the love with which she has already inspired me, and feel by anticipation the additional flame that she will hereafter kindle in my breast. — Again, you have the confidence to assert that she is yours : but I deny the fact : for who has ever maintained that stolen goods are the property of the thief who has purloined them ?

No, no, Monsieur Varmont, it is in vain for you to entreat, conjure, apologise, — in vain to stoop to the meanest

condescensions : — my resolution is taken : — I never will consent to give her up.

Until I have more leisure, I must defer answering the insignificant questions with which you tease me : but in the mean time I consent to accept of your apology, and even your compliments. I am not, however, quite sure that it really is a compliment to Murville, when you condescend to acknowledge him superior to Varfont. Be that as it may, I am disposed to show you every indulgence : but as to the lady, I am determined not to surrender her.

MURVILLE to VARFONT.

June 24.

IF you still entertain any doubts of my veracity, my dear friend, your confidant can easily clear them up: — he can assure you that the lady is very far from loving you.

In spite of the ridiculous disguise under which your valet was concealed, she fancied she recognised him; and the whole house immediately echoed with her screams. The amiable girl embraced my knees — my words are literally true — she fell on her knees, and, embracing mine, earnestly supplicated me not to deliver her up to her most deadly enemy. — I had not the

most distant intention of doing so — her best friend should not have obtained her from me. — Your worthy emissary, nevertheless, after having fruitlessly employed the meanest supplications of which a footman is capable, suddenly assumed all the majesty of an ambassador! Like that famed Roman who carried peace and war in the folds of his robe, Monsieur Lafleur with a consequential air thrust his hand in his pocket, and immediately drew out death and destruction in the shape of a challenge in your hand-writing! — I at first received your manifesto with all due respect: but your ambassador having taken some insolent liberties, I was just considering whether I had not better commence hostilities by throwing him out of the window. Luckily a single word from the lady was sufficient to rid me

of his presence — “*Monster!*” cried she, “if you do not instantly retire, I’ll discover the whole!” — That instant the monster was gone.

On my part, after having recovered from my agitation, I again and again read over your note, and pondered its contents. — Varmont, that note convinces me that you are an arrant fool, or a deep politician; — a fool, if you seriously mean to expose yourself, for the sake of the lady, to be run through the body by your best friend; — a deep politician, if you give me this appointment to meet you on the frontier, only with a view to get me away from the charming girl. However the case may be, I am now forewarned, and shall accordingly stand on my guard. Whatever danger may be in reserve for me,

here I am determined to stay, and defend that treasure which I am now less inclined to surrender than I ever was before. — If, on your side, you persist in the design of wresting it from me, — come, my dear friend! come! Murville will await your approach, without recoiling an inch. Thus each of us will act perfectly in character: 'tis not the party who is attacked, that ought to be the first to quit his ground.

Nevertheless, Varmont, will you take a good advice? Remain quietly at home. Do not come to defy my valour on my own lawn! — I know you are an adept in fencing: but — without vanity be it said — I also have distinguished myself in the art. You know, my friend, it is incumbent on men of our stamp to be expert in a tilting bout.

Tilting would soon degenerate to a frivolous and contemptible amusement, if never employed except at the call of that romantic honour, of which we talk so loudly. In order to conceive a proper idea of its value, we must consider it in its more useful subserviencies. To it we are indebted for the privilege of attempting and executing with impunity those diabolical pranks of which we make our daily boast — but from which we should soon be obliged to refrain, if, like the common herd of sneaking sober people, we were tamely to submit to the rules of ordinary justice. Beyond all doubt, it is indispensably necessary that we should, in any sudden emergency, be able to say to a man who might be tempted to make a noise, “It is true, Sir, that I have dexterously won your whole for-

time at the gaming-table — that I have publicly insulted your wife in the ball-room — that I have seduced your daughter — carried off your sister — sneered at, ridiculed, exposed yourself : — nought remained, Sir, but to kick you ; — I now do that ; — and you must patiently pocket all those insults — or, I run you through the body !” — What an excellent invention for us is that system which sets the prejudices of education in opposition to the laws, — and, exalting personal strength above all authority, exempts us from the necessity of possessing any virtues, or the smallest atom of morality, provided we only wear a sword ! I give you therefore credit for valuing yourself upon yours ; nay, I can even conceive that you will be inclined to think it more formidable than mine, if you follow up

my reasoning with rigid strictness. But, I caution you to beware ! When you formerly led me to take the first step in the career of libertinism, I reflected that I should perhaps, at some future day, find myself unable to avoid following your steps in a more criminal path ; and that at length the devil might tempt me to aim at surpassing you. Impressed with that idea, I took my measures accordingly. — Take, therefore, my advice, Varmont, and reserve your courage for some less perilous occasion : for, between us adepts at the blade, there is nothing to be gained on either side but a few inches of cold iron. Above all things, do not attempt to send Laffeur to me again. He must, on his part, feel very little inclination to come here a second time : and I, on

the other hand, shall be very glad never more to see him. Previous to his appearance, the lady had already twenty times requested that I would set her at liberty:—you may judge how much more pressing she is become in her solicitations since the servant's visit has given her reason to dread a visit from his master.—Would you believe it? she actually attempted this morning to escape through the window: but though I should have been diverted to have seen your clumsy ambassador take such a leap—and was so strongly tempted to compel him to it yesterday—I thought it too dangerous for a young lady. Accordingly I have barred up the windows of her apartment: but this tender attention on my part, which she ungratefully brands with the name of tyranny, retards instead of promot-

ing the success of my plans. Be quiet, Varmont — do not interfere. Since it is not in your power to prevent my obtaining the object of my wishes, would you seek the mean consolation of delaying the happy moment? Such conduct would be contemptible! I request, I entreat, that you will be quiet — and, above all things, do not again send me Lafleur.

Heark'ye, if he ever more dares to make his appearance here, I give you fair warning that he shall not be suffered to depart until he has made ample confession of every circumstance which the lady, in her sudden transport, was on the point of discovering, had not your prudent confidant prevented, by his hasty flight, a disclosure, of which the bare threat had so dread-

fully alarmed him. Varmont, 'tis no trifle, in the first instance, to ravish a girl: but it often happens that an action, in itself unjustifiable, is accompanied by a variety of circumstances which greatly contribute to aggravate its criminality. Now every thing concurs to convince me, that, in your affair with Mademoiselle Terville, the incidents and episodes were of a piece with the main plot. You certainly must have out-done your former out-doings: for, in short, in your last letter, so little calculated to give me any information on the subject, and immediately followed by a number of notes equally unsatisfactory, but which display in every line the efforts of art aiming to be natural, — in all that tedious scribbling, I say, not a word appears — no, not a single word, that could intimate the most di-

stant intention on your part ever to disclose to me the particulars of that new mystery of iniquity. Do not therefore compel me to fathom it. Although you are much younger than I, you have often set me a frightful example in the paths I have above-mentioned: and who knows but the lessons which this adventure would furnish, might prove too shocking for your pupil? Yes, Varfont, I suspect that you have made the dose too powerful for me to swallow. — Be quiet, Varfont — I beg of you, be quiet; and, above all things, never again send me Lafleur.

MURVILLE to DOLERVAL.

Langey, June 24.

OH beneficent apoplexy! why didst thou not carry off the old man some years sooner? or thou, rather, devouring ocean, why didst thou not swallow up the young man some years later? — What appears to me wholly unaccountable, is that Bovile should have so awkwardly taken his leave of Eleonora precisely at the very moment when her everlasting D'Etiolles was on the point of fairly bidding us all an eternal adieu. True love is seldom guilty of similar blunders. But, at all events, my dear Dolerval, our charming sister is now doubly a widow.

Ought we to lament her fate? Egad, I am not perfectly clear that we should. If on the one hand we have reason to weep, on the other we may fairly be allowed to smile. She has lost her lover, it is true: but at the same time she is released from her husband. In a word, I suspect, that, all circumstances considered, a due proportion will be found to prevail between the happy and the unfortunate events of life: — I plainly see that the world is governed by an over-ruling providence.

Present therefore to my dear Eleonora — unless, however, you should think it improper — a double compliment in my name, — the one of condolence — the other of congratulation.

You may very safely, my dear Doler-

val, venture to compliment *me* in that manner: *I* shall not be affronted on the occasion: for in truth I know not whether my present condition claims your sympathy in joy or your sympathy in sorrow. That sensibility of which you so often boast to me — can it be a defect in our blood — an hereditary disease — a family failing, which I have only partially cured in my own constitution by the use of palliatives, but never been able wholly to eradicate? I vow I feel it springing up and expanding in my bosom! It is very troublesome: it impedes my respiration. When in company with the charming Terville, 'tis then that I feel my breath quite stopt: and in my deep amaze I hear myself sigh. On these occasions, my figure, formerly all gaiety and life, assumes such an air — the

very air of a man deeply infected with your disease ! And the cunning gipsy, who plainly perceives my embarrassment, strives to take advantage of it. She importunes me to set her at liberty : for — if I have not already told you of the circumstance, I must now inform you, that I keep her under lock and key. — I fancy I hear you exclaim against such a procedure — Well ! tell me then, can you point out a more effectual mode of detaining “ an angel ” against her will ? — But, to return — she demands, and I refuse. — Her voice next assuming a still softer tone, she begs, entreats, supplicates : — then chiefly it is that the family weakness prevails, and I feel my whole soul moved within me. Has a tear — one single tear — dropped from her eye ? — Mine immediately — yes, mine is ready

to shed tears too. I am uneasy, I am vexed, to find myself in such a condition — I am weary, I am ashamed, of it! And nevertheless I cannot help owning that it is not wholly unproductive of pleasing sensations.

However, if the lady intends to persevere in tormenting me thus, I must, some of these days, take advantage of a sudden start of courage: and perhaps, by boldly risking the attack, I may bring the affair to a happy conclusion.

VARMONT to LAFLEUR.

Paris, June 28.

I WAS convinced of it: there was not the smallest room to doubt of the fact. And yet you, who have both seen and heard — you still hesitate? 'Tis well worth while, forsooth, to lie concealed in the vicinity, and do nothing! You apply to me for fresh instructions! But did I not, before your departure, give you every possible instruction that the case could require? Did I not clearly foresee the embarrassing situation in which you are involved? Have you forgotten that the challenge was a mere bravado, and to be employed only as the last resource, which might

perhaps prevail with our gentleman by alarming his fears? Why then do you seem to expect that I should go and expose myself in a duel with him? That measure is not to be adopted until you have unsuccessfully tried every other. No doubt, we shall have our revenge on the insolent fellow who has maltreated you: but, in preference to every other consideration, the more urgent business must be first dispatched.

If what we have already done were still undone — if there were question of taking the first step in this affair — now that I am cautioned by the cruel uneasiness that racks my soul, I should perhaps hesitate. But what I at first consented to do for the sake of my pecuniary advantage alone, — can I now re-

fuse to do it, when more powerfully impelled by the consideration of our common safety? Do you not feel the full force of those alarming words, "If you do not instantly retire, I'll discover the whole?"—Fool! blockhead! could she talk of discovering any thing unless she knew it? Of what consequence is it to us, how she has herself discovered it? The main, the most urgent consideration with us, is to take effectual steps to prevent her ever discovering it to any body else.

Be alert therefore: exert yourself in action. You are provided with money and arms: you thought the execution of my project a matter of no difficulty:—be expeditious:—we have not a moment to lose. Sooner or later we

should both inevitably feel the consequences of your neglect. Pluck up a little courage, and consign to the earth what the waves have so unluckily thrown back upon our hands.

MURVILLE to DOLERVAL.

Langey, 4th July, ten in the morning,

LAMENT my misfortune, Dolerval! Is it possible for the prudence and foresight of man to guard against the treachery of a villain and the stratagems of a woman? Nought can surpass the ingenuity of the latter: and the success of the former is unparalleled. Which of the two has corrupted my valet-de-chambre, I cannot tell: but one thing, of which I am unfortunately but too certain, is that my rascal Marcel has disappeared during the last night, together with my fair prisoner, whom he had released from her confinement. Hence I naturally conclude that the

ungrateful girl has fled from me — unless indeed the treacherous Varfont has carried her off by force or fraud.

Thus abandoned, I should stand in need of all my natural gaiety: — but that too has cruelly forsaken me. Never did I before experience any event so little calculated to amuse or comfort me: never did any misfortune appear to me less suppartable. I feel within me a something which prompts a sigh. Is it self-love? is it love for Terville? — Guess it, Dolerval, if you can: — for I have, at this moment, an equal repugnance to make the avowal to you, or even tacitly to acknowledge the true state of the case within my own bosom.

There is one circumstance which sets

me distracted : — I am forced instantaneously to set out for Brest : I have just received orders to attend there without a moment's delay ; and perhaps I shall be obliged to embark, and be kept on ship-board during the remainder of the season. Thus I am precluded from personally pursuing the fugitive or the ravisher : but at least I take the precaution of sending a trusty myrmidon to Paris, who will plant himself in Varmont's neighbourhood, diligently observe his motions, and send me intelligence whether the poor girl has again fallen into the hands of the man whom she so cordially detests. Should that be the case, I would endeavour to exert greater diligence and skill in recovering my lost property, than I have shown in keeping it.

Adieu, my dear brother ! Salute Eleonora in my name. I love her the more, now that so great a similarity exists between her fate and mine. She has lost the object of her tender affections : — the same misfortune has befallen me ; and I dread from my soul, that, that like her, I shall be inconsolable. The source of her misery and of mine is that we both possess too great a portion of sensibility and virtue. — Let this be a warning to you, Dolerval.

LAFLEUR to VARMONT.

Blois, 2d July, six in the afternoon.

MAKE your mind easy, Sir : there is nobody to blab at present : — the business is settled.

Marcel demanded a considerable sum : I gave him every thing he required : I knew you could not stand to higgler for so capital a stroke. — As soon as the cage was unlocked, the bird came out of her own accord. I was for some time at a loss how to dispose of her, as Marcel had eloped with us, and kept us company. But quitting us at a few leagues' distance from Saumur, he left me at liberty ;

and about the break of day, in a piece of wood-land near Tours, the bird sang her last notes:—in that spot I left her under the fallen leaves.

Nevertheless, it is from Blois that I write to you; being detained here by sickness. It was a dreadful undertaking that you charged me with:—to execute it, required all the courage that I could summon to my aid. I am persuaded, Sir, that even yourself, who are certainly a more experienced veteran than I, could not, without shuddering, have accomplished that business:—the bird had such beautiful plumage, and so charming a voice! She affected me so much, that I have not yet recovered.—I quiver in every limb—I am very, very sick. Indeed, Sir, instead of the five hundred louis-

d'ors that you promised me, you ought
in all conscience to give me a thou-
sand; and I solemnly swear to you,
that, if you were to offer me four times
as much, I would not do the business
over again.

EMILY to DOROTHY.

From the Presbytery * of St. Cyr, near Tours,
5th August, seven in the evening.

I HAVE not, my dear Dorothy, even the melancholy consolation of entertaining a single doubt on the subject: — the infamous Varmont has filled up the measure of his crimes.

Having for some days past been more urgently importuned by the insulting proposals of Monsieur de Murville, I vainly endeavoured to gain over his

* I know not whether the word *Presbytery* has ever been used in English to denote the house or dwelling of a priest (*presbyter*): in that signification it is employed in these volumes. T.R.

valet-de-chambre who was intrusted with the keys of my prison. I leave you to judge with what earnestness I redoubled my efforts, when the appearance of Lafleur, who was commissioned by Varfont to claim me from the hands of Murville, had convinced me that my enemy was no doubt determined, at whatever price, to accomplish his detestable projects.

My solicitations, now become more frequent and more pressing, at length appeared to touch the heart of Marcel. — The day before yesterday, we had agreed that I should hold myself in readiness to make my escape in the dead of the following night. He came to me according to appointment: he opened the doors of my apartment; and the precaution he had taken of

bringing no light with him, appeared to me quite natural. We descended the staircase without noise, and hastily traversed the garden, at the back door of which I was at first surprised to find a post-chaise in waiting.

Marcel, who perceived how much I was astonished at this instance of attention on his part, said to me in the most unaffected tone, "You must quit the vicinity of this chateau with all possible expedition. On foot, on the high road, in the darkness of night, you could not proceed very far. I shall therefore conduct you some leagues' distance: but I intend to quit you at the break of day; and then you will manage in the best manner you can."

Satisfied with these few words, I en-

tered the carriage. Marcel took his station behind : and I was so transported with tumultuous joy, that I had not even the presence of mind to inquire or consider who our driver might be. Alas ! I discovered him at the first dawn of the morning.

We were in a wood : Marcel had just quitted the carriage ; and I was beginning to feel very uneasy sensations on seeing myself thus exposed, in a manner, at the discretion of a stranger. Suddenly my conductor turned aside from the highway, and drove into a by-road. — I was alarmed, — I shrieked. — Immediately he looked back towards me, and “ If you make the least noise,” said he, “ I’ll instantly put you to death.”

Conceive, Dorothy, my horror, on recognising the features and the voice of that cruel footman, whose appearance at Murville's country-seat had so much alarmed me a few days before ! A dark cloud overspread my eyes — a cold sweat bedewed my face — and I remained motionless through fear in that carriage which was conducting me to the spot where a parricide brother was no doubt preparing for my destruction.

Scarcely had we advanced thirty yards, when we came to a more dark and gloomy spot. Laffeur stopped the horses : I screamed and shrieked aloud : he turned towards me with a threatening gesture : fear immediately choaked my voice : but I suppose there was a something in my countenance and attitude, sufficiently moving to melt the

heart of a barbarian: for he again whipped his horses and proceeded. But alas! he soon resumed his bloody resolutions, and made me, twenty times in one short quarter of an hour, experience pangs more cruel than those of death itself. — Every moment he slackened his pace, turned back his head, and cast on his victim a look of savage ferocity.

On my part, seeing that all my hopes rested on his compassion, I threw myself on my knees in the fatal carriage, presenting to the eyes of my intended assassin my countenance bathed with tears, and my out-stretched hands clasped together in earnest supplication. Every time that he viewed that sad spectacle, he seemed to relent: but the impressions of pity were of so short duration, that it was visible the crime must

at length be accomplished. At least such was my conviction; and I suffered a thousand deaths while in dreadful expectation of the fatal stroke.

At length Lafleur, having steeled his soul with additional courage and ferocity, alights from his horse: but lest the sight of me should again shake his resolution, he kept his head turned aside while he approached me. Meantime I rushed out of the carriage, and advanced towards him. My eyes sought to meet his: he saw me, and was unable to strike the deadly blow. Immediately I dropped down at his feet, — embraced his knees, — and exclaimed, “ No, my friend! no! you will not do it! You are not so void of mercy as the cruel wretch who has sent you. You are not capable of committing the atro-

cious crimes which he prescribes, — you, who, at the moment I was sinking in the waves, stretched out your friendly hand to rescue me from destruction! Leave, leave the execution of the bloody design to him who plunged me back into the ocean. Can you be apprehensive that I should ever betray or bring you into danger, — I, who pardoned even *him*, — I, who, to screen him from the just punishment due to his black deeds, consented to keep my story, and even my very name, a secret? Even now, I still consent to do the same. I'll retire to some obscure village — there conceal my wretchedness and my misfortunes — and never more shall the name of Emily de Varmont be heard — I promise, I swear it to you by all that is sacred. — Return, however, to the inhuman wretch who sent you :

tell him his sister is no more. — Let him rejoice at my deplorable end: let him enrich himself with my spoils. I, on the other hand, shall ever remember that when he wished to take away my life, it was you who saved it."

While I thus endeavoured to awaken the sentiments of humanity in the heart of Lafleur, he appeared to be successively agitated by various discordant passions. I observed him with that quick but acute attention of which danger renders us capable. At first his countenance exhibited all the stern resolution of despair: it next displayed irresolution and anxiety: happily these were soon succeeded by pity; and pity at length brought on repentance. The moment was now come, when, if he had possessed sufficient strength to speak,

my intended murderer would have implored my mercy and pardon in turn. His uplifted arm fell languid by his side: the poignard dropped from his grasp. — Instantly seizing the favourable moment for escape, I sprang up on my feet, and plunging into the thick of the forest, ran, I knew not whither, but continued my flight straight forward in quest of an asylum.

Being soon obliged to stop in order to recover breath, I felt an irresistible inclination to look back towards the object of my terror. Through an opening in the thick foliage I perceived him still motionless in the spot where I had left him. “But why,” thought I to myself, “is his face turned this way? why do his eyes still pursue my steps?” The idea of a danger from which I had not

as yet wholly escaped, and which might still overtake me, impelled me to resume my flight. Terror added wings to my speed; nor did I again stop until my fears were completely allayed by the rattling of the chaise, which, I could plainly perceive, was hurrying away from the spot at full gallop.

At that moment, feeling myself ready to faint, I flung myself on the ground, bathed in a flood of tears: and uttering a bitter imprecation against the impious wretch who thirsted for my blood, I returned my warmest and devoutest thanks to that Almighty Being who sooner or later rescues the weak from the oppression of the wicked. My heart was next expanded with that ineffable joy which succeeds the emotions of terror at the moment of a fortunate escape

from imminent danger. I congratulated myself on the severe trial I had undergone, since it promised to be the last I should ever have to experience, — since it had been the means of recovering my liberty, — and since by it I was at once and for ever delivered from the deadly rage of a detestable brother, and the persecutions of an unworthy lover.

But whither direct my steps? how procure a subsistence? — alas! to whom apply for relief? — “What!” said I to myself — “shall a hapless woman, who has not deserved the misfortunes that have befallen her, — shall she be unable to find an asylum? Was it not with a view to conduct me to a port of safety, that providence, ever just, ever attentive to those in distress, has so long supported me during the storm? Can that provi-

dence permit that all the evils to which human nature is subject should at once be accumulated on my innocent inexperienced youth? After so many sufferings, may I not hope to find a safe and honourable retreat, where, in the obscurity of a laborious life, I may enjoy — if not happiness — at least some degree of peace and tranquillity?"

These reflections revived my hopes, and re-animated my courage. Full of confidence, I walked on towards those unknown places where I was to experience a less deplorable fate. I had soon traversed the wood, and now found myself on the high road, whence I discovered at a small distance a number of steeples, which exhibited the appearance of a large and populous city. After I had advanced somewhat farther,

I perceived that near the city stood a village. The latter seemed better suited to my present condition than the former: — in a village I should no doubt find it easier to conceal myself — and there I should be more likely to find those hospitable virtues which are the usual attendants on simplicity of manners. — Influenced by these considerations, I turned to the right hand, and, leaving the city of Tours on my left, entered the village of St. Cyr, where I knocked at the door of the presbytery.

A young man opened it. — “I wish,” said I, “to speak to the clergyman.”

“He is ready to hear what you have to say, Madam: — I am the person you inquire for.”

“ Do you stand in need of a servant maid, Sir ?

“ As to needs, Madam, I have no lack of them : it is only the means that are wanting. — Whoever sent you to me, must, it seems, be very ignorant of the situation of a poor curate on a very slender salary.”

“ Then you refuse me an asylum ? you have no room for me in your house ?”

“ Room, Madam ? — as much room as you please : but as to provisions, a very scanty store, — and money, none at all.”

“ I only require employment and bread.”

"Bread?—I am not overstocked even with that: yet I have no objection to share it with you. We may even sometimes contrive to add to it a few vegetables, milk, or eggs: but remember I tell you before-hand that bread constitutes the main article on my table.—You talk of being my servant!" continued he, viewing me more attentively: "but if I may credit your air and appearance, you are not calculated for such a situation."

"The more retired and obscure it is," interrupted I, "the better."

"Heark'ye!" resumed he with easy good-humour: "you seem to be willing enough: but, in spite of all you can say, you appear to be as delicate as you are handsome. I think the bustle and

fatigue of keeping the house in order would be too much for you :— I undertake that task myself — I am accustomed to it : — but you may assist me in tending my little garden ; — you may take care of my linen, which is none of the best, — and alternately wash my two surplices : — will that plan answer, do you think ?”

“ Perfectly well : — I am satisfied.”

“ My charming girl ! you astonish me. — I again repeat that with me you will be in want of every thing.”

My dear Dorothy, I attentively viewed the young man : — his figure as well as his words inspired me with perfect confidence. — “ Sir,” said I, “ put an

end to my uncertainty, — decide my fate, — admit me into your house."

"Most willingly, Madam: and my only motive for telling you all this, is that you may know before-hand what you have to expect — But stop! one word more, I pray. Would you not soon be inclined to quit me?"

"Never."

"And you'll be my niece?"

"Yes, Sir: 'tis the very thing I wish for: — I'll be your niece."

"Well, I commend your choice. Those who have most money, sometimes appear the most amiable, but are seldom the happiest or the best. Walk

in," continued he, stretching forth his hand to me: "welcome to my humble roof! I have been several years in expectation of your coming. With me you will be poor and sober: but, on the other hand, you will, if you resemble me, always have an excellent stomach, a chearful temper, and a light heart."

At these words, Dorothy, I entered the presbytery. — You now begin to breathe after the horrors of the former part of my recital: and my hand is fatigued with holding the pen. Tomorrow I shall give you an account of the subsequent conversation that passed between me and the honest ecclesiastic whom I have chosen as a master.